SECRET EMPIRE

UNITED WE STAND

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SECRET EMPIRE: UPRISING

WRITER: **DEREK LANDY**
ARTIST: **JOSHUA CASSARA**
COLOR ARTIST: **RACHELLE ROSENBERG**
LETTERER: **VC's JOE CARAMAGNA**
COVER ART: **MEGHAN HETRICK**
EDITOR: **ALANNA SMITH**
EXECUTIVE EDITOR: **TOM BREVOORT**

SECRET EMPIRE: UNDERGROUND

WRITER: **JEREMY WHITLEY**
ARTIST: **ERIC KODA**
COLOR ARTIST: **ANTONIO FABELA**
LETTERER: **VC's TRAVIS LANHAM**
COVER ART: **R.B. SILVA** & **ANDY TROY**
EDITOR: **CHARLES BEACHAM**
EXECUTIVE EDITOR: **TOM BREVOORT**

SECRET EMPIRE: UNITED

WRITER: **JIM ZUB**
ARTIST: **ARIO ANINDITO**
COLOR ARTIST: **JAVA TARTAGLIA**
LETTERER: **VC's JOE CARAMAGNA**
COVER ART: **RYAN STEGMAN**
& **JESUS ABURTOV**
EDITOR: **CHARLES BEACHAM**
EXECUTIVE EDITOR: **TOM BREVOORT**

UNCANNY AVENGERS #24-25

WRITER: **JIM ZUB**
ARTISTS: **KIM JACINTO**
WITH **JAHNOY LINDSAY** (#25) & **JUANAN RAMÍREZ** (#25)
COLOR ARTISTS: **TAMRA BONVILLAIN**
WITH **RACHELLE ROSENBERG** (#25)
LETTERER: **VC's CLAYTON COWLES**
COVER ART: **R.B. SILVA** & **JESUS ABURTOV**
ASSISTANT EDITOR: **ALANNA SMITH**
EDITOR: **TOM BREVOORT**

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WRITERS: **CHAD BOWERS** & **CHRIS SIMS**
ARTIST: **DANILO S. BEYRUTH**
COLOR ARTIST: **TAMRA BONVILLAIN**
LETTERER: **VC's CORY PETIT**
COVER ART: **DAVID NAKAYAMA**
ASSISTANT EDITOR: **KATHLEEN WISNESKI**
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BOOK DESIGNER: **JAY BOWEN**
DIGITAL MANAGER/PRODUCTION: **TIM SMITH 3** | DIGITAL PRODUCTION: **KOU CHEN & RACHEL YOUNG**

EDITOR IN CHIEF: **AXEL ALONSO** | CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER: **JOE QUESADA**
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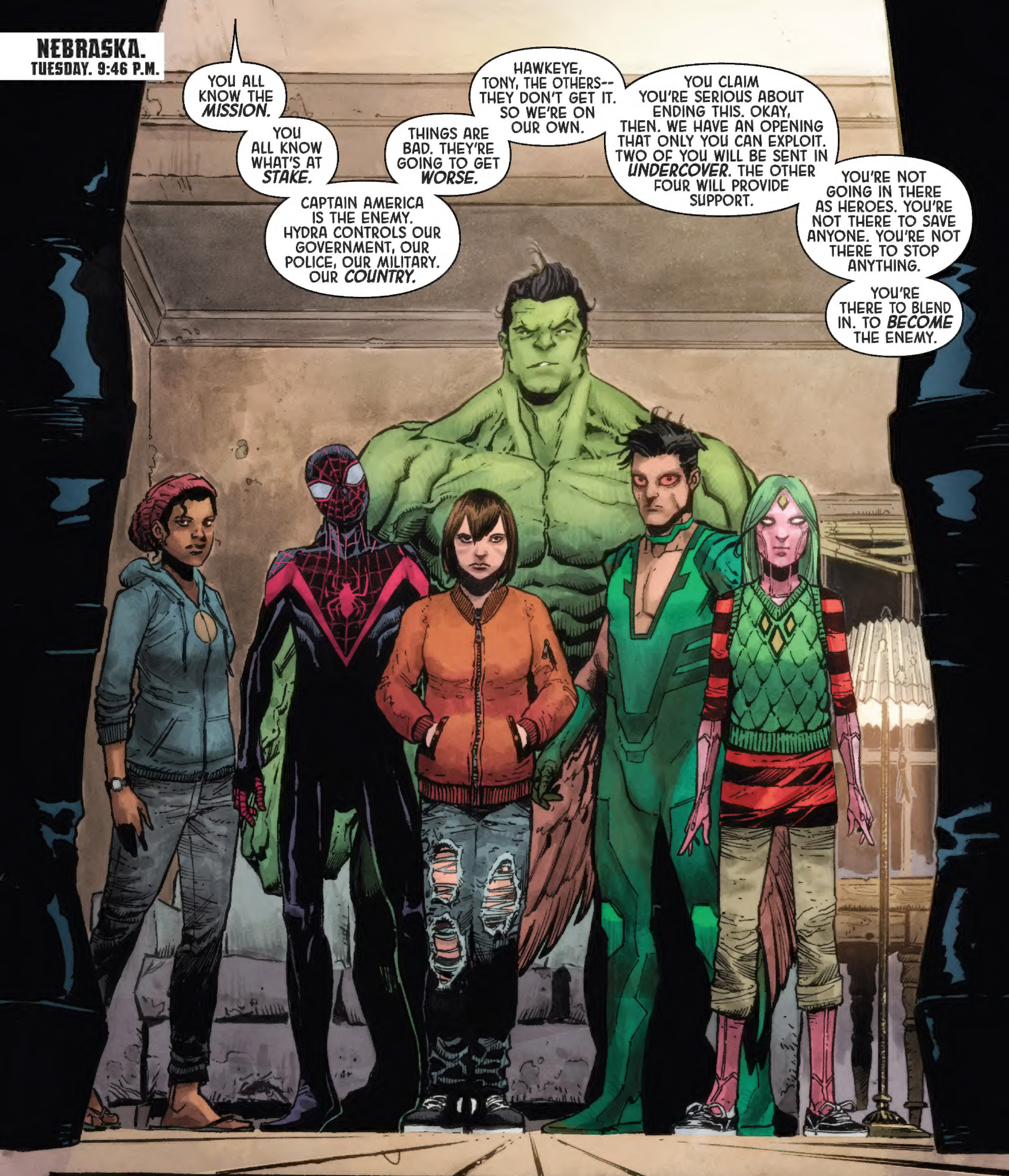
SECRET EMPIRE™

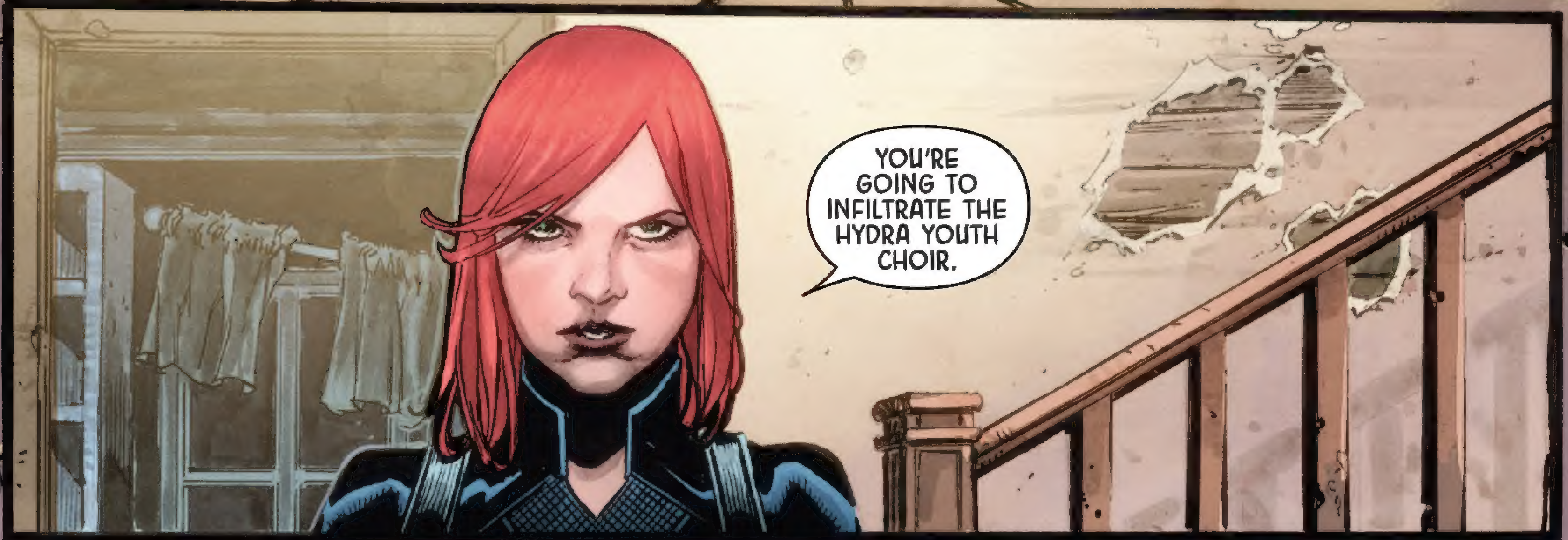
UPRISING

LANDY
CASSARA
ROSENBERG

#1

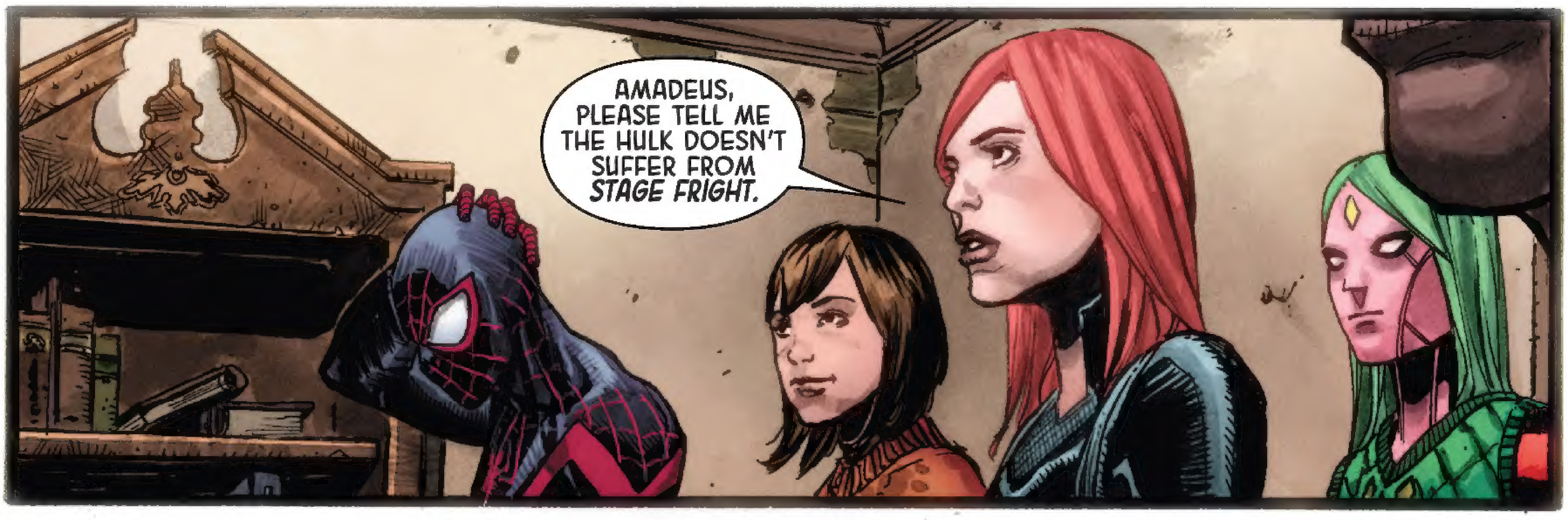
MARVEL

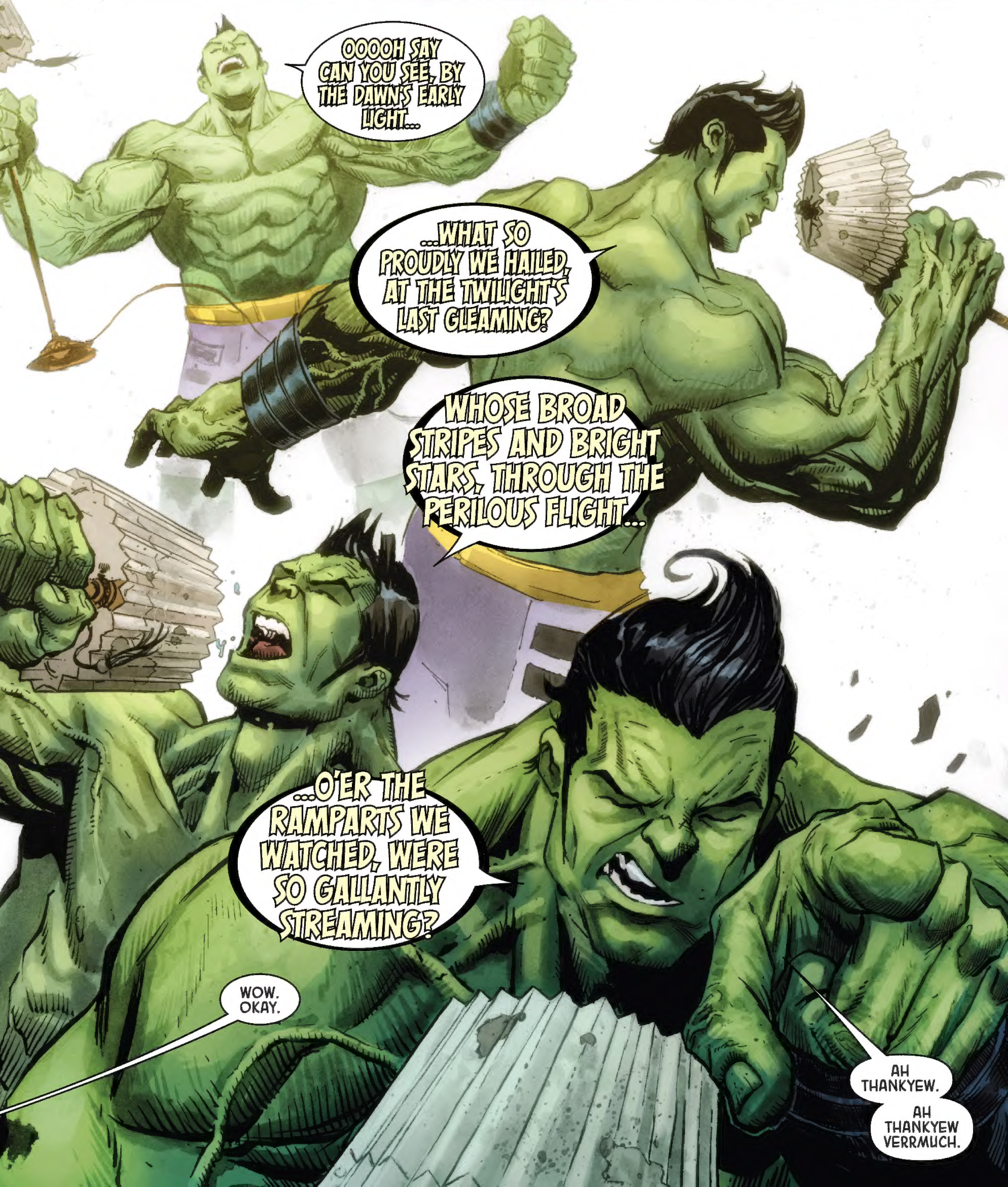

NEBRASKA.
TUESDAY. 9:46 P.M.
YOU ALL KNOW THE *MISSION.*
YOU ALL KNOW WHAT'S AT *STAKE.*
CAPTAIN AMERICA IS THE ENEMY. HYDRA CONTROLS OUR GOVERNMENT, OUR POLICE, OUR MILITARY. OUR *COUNTRY.*
THINGS ARE BAD. THEY'RE GOING TO GET *WORSE.*
HAWKEYE, TONY, THE OTHERS-- THEY DON'T GET IT. SO WE'RE ON OUR OWN.
YOU CLAIM YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT ENDING THIS. OKAY, THEN. WE HAVE AN OPENING THAT ONLY YOU CAN EXPLOIT. TWO OF YOU WILL BE SENT IN *UNDERCOVER.* THE OTHER FOUR WILL PROVIDE SUPPORT.
YOU'RE NOT GOING IN THERE AS HEROES. YOU'RE NOT THERE TO SAVE ANYONE. YOU'RE NOT THERE TO STOP ANYTHING.
YOU'RE THERE TO BLEND IN. TO *BECOME* THE ENEMY.


YOU'RE GOING TO INFILTRATE THE HYDRA YOUTH CHOIR.

THIS IS LAME.
SO LAME.
CAN I NOT DO THIS?
I LIKE SINGING.
CRAP.
WHY DOES HYDRA *HAVE* A YOUTH CHOIR?
YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS FOSTER CAMARADERIE, PROVIDE A SENSE OF BELONGING AND SWAY ALLEGIANCES.
IF ALL YOUR FRIENDS JUMPED OFF A BRIDGE, WOULDN'T YOU?
MOST OF MY FRIENDS CAN FLY.
SO *YES*, THEN.
BUT *YOU* WON'T BE GOING UNDERCOVER, VIV.
NEITHER WILL *YOU*, FALCON. YOUR WINGS ARE A GIVEAWAY.
PRAISE JEBUS.
WIDOW... I ALREADY *HAVE* RED ROOM TRAINING. I'M NOT A FAN.
YOU'RE NOT GONNA ASK US TO DO ANYTHING...*BAD*, ARE YOU?
I'LL ASK OF YOU WHATEVER IS REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE MISSION, WASP. RIGHT *NOW*, THAT MEANS AUDITIONING.
WHO'S FIRST? RIRI?
THIS IS SO LAME.
♪ *LITTLE GIRL ON SUNLIT LAWN, DREAMS OF THE DAY WHEN SHE WILL BE GROWN.* ♪
OOOH! I LOVE THIS ONE!
♪ *SHE THINKS HER DADDY AND MOM WILL ALWAYS BE THERE, LONG AS THEY ARE, SHE HASN'T A CARE...* ♪

BUT THEN SHE GROWS UP--ALL TOO SOON--SHE GROWS UP AND THE LIGHT OF THE MOON, TELLS HER THAT THINGS AREN'T GONNA BE THE WAY THEY ARE IN POETRY!
I VOTE FOR NADIA.
YAY!
LET NADIA DO IT. PLEASE.
SPIDER-MAN, YOU'RE NEXT.
UM-- OKAY.
...
IS HE ALL RIGHT? HAS HE FALLEN ASLEEP?
IT'S HARD TO TELL WITH THE MASK.
I'M REALLY SORRY. I CAN'T SING IN FRONT OF--
--PEOPLE.

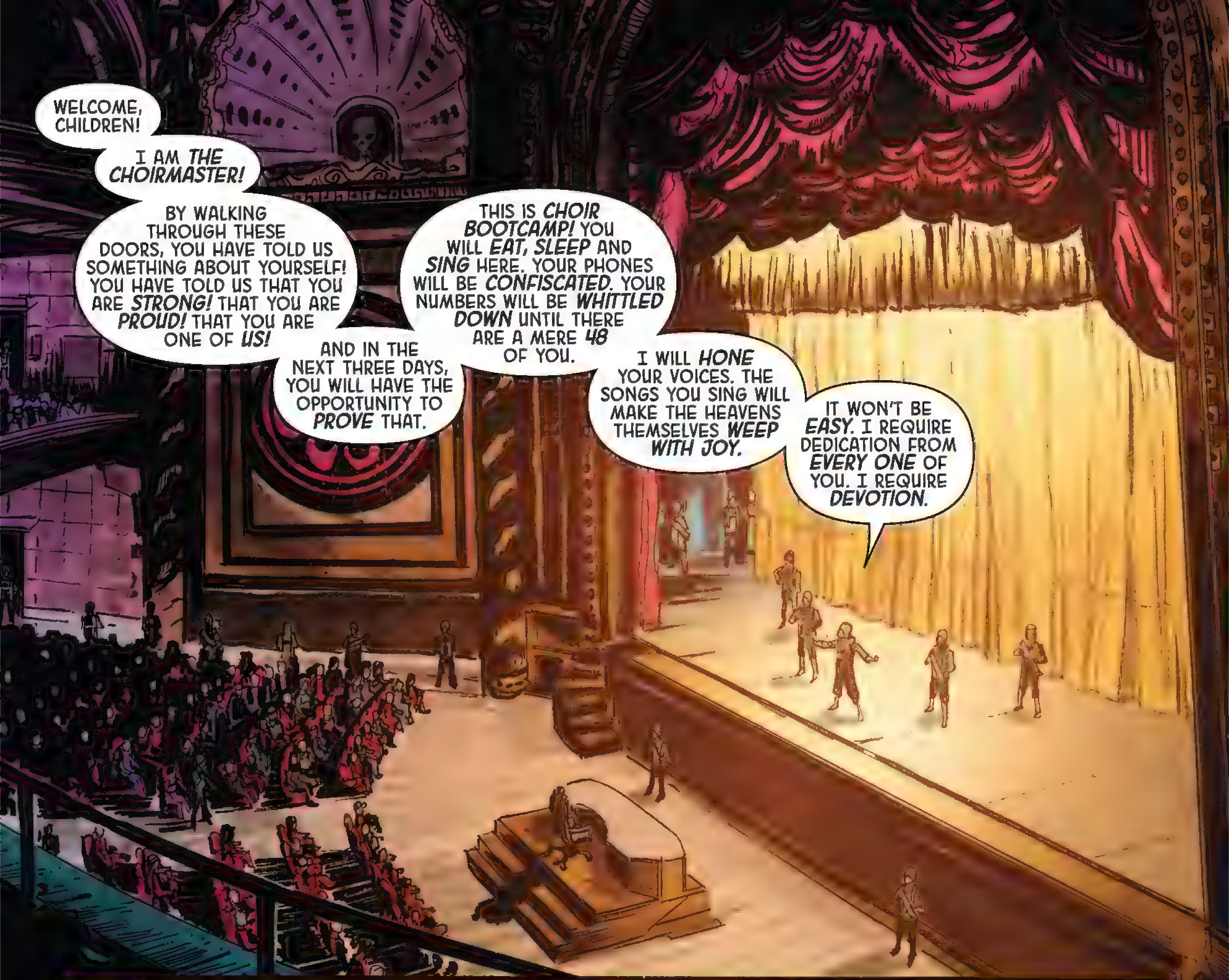

AMADEUS, PLEASE TELL ME THE HULK DOESN'T SUFFER FROM *STAGE FRIGHT.*

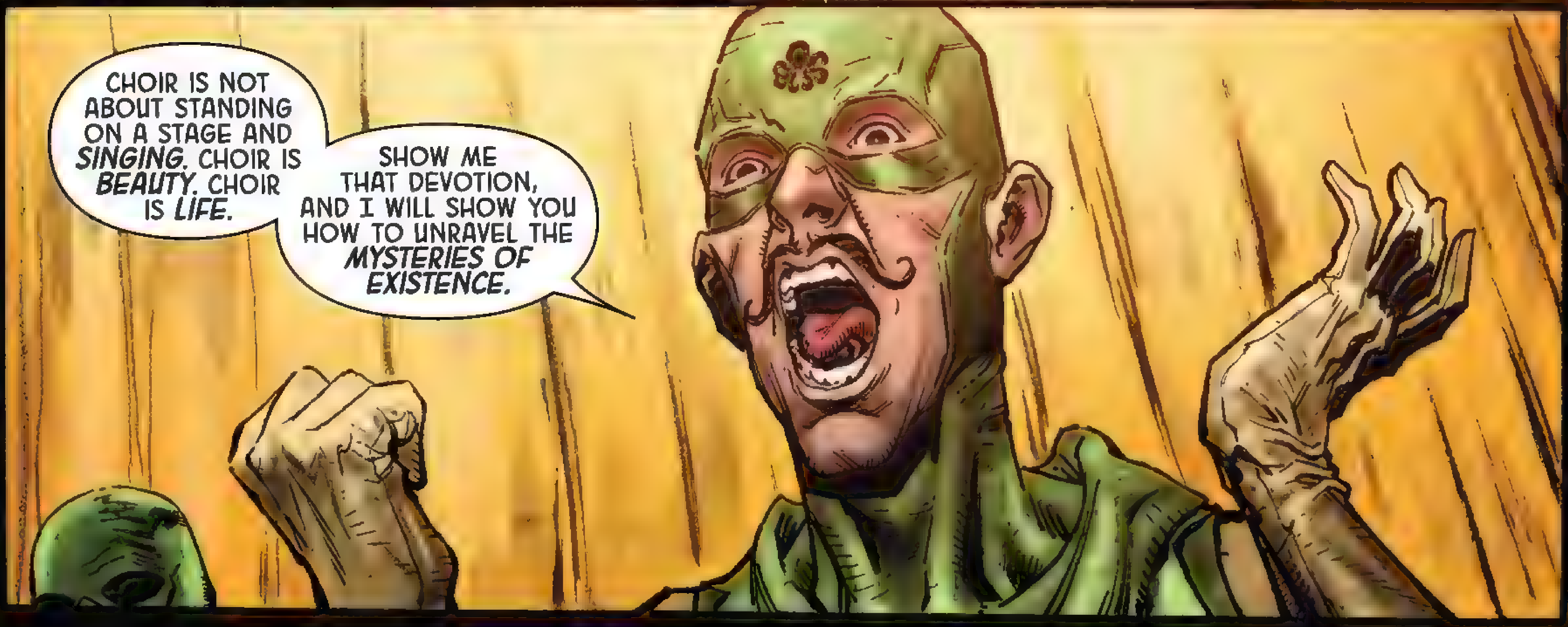

OOOOH SAY CAN YOU SEE, BY THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT...
...WHAT SO PROUDLY WE HAILED, AT THE TWILIGHT'S LAST GLEAMING?
WHOSE BROAD STRIPES AND BRIGHT STARS, THROUGH THE PERILOUS FLIGHT...
...O'ER THE RAMPARTS WE WATCHED, WERE SO GALLANTLY STREAMING?
WOW. OKAY.
AH THANKYEW.
AH THANKYEW VERRMUCH.

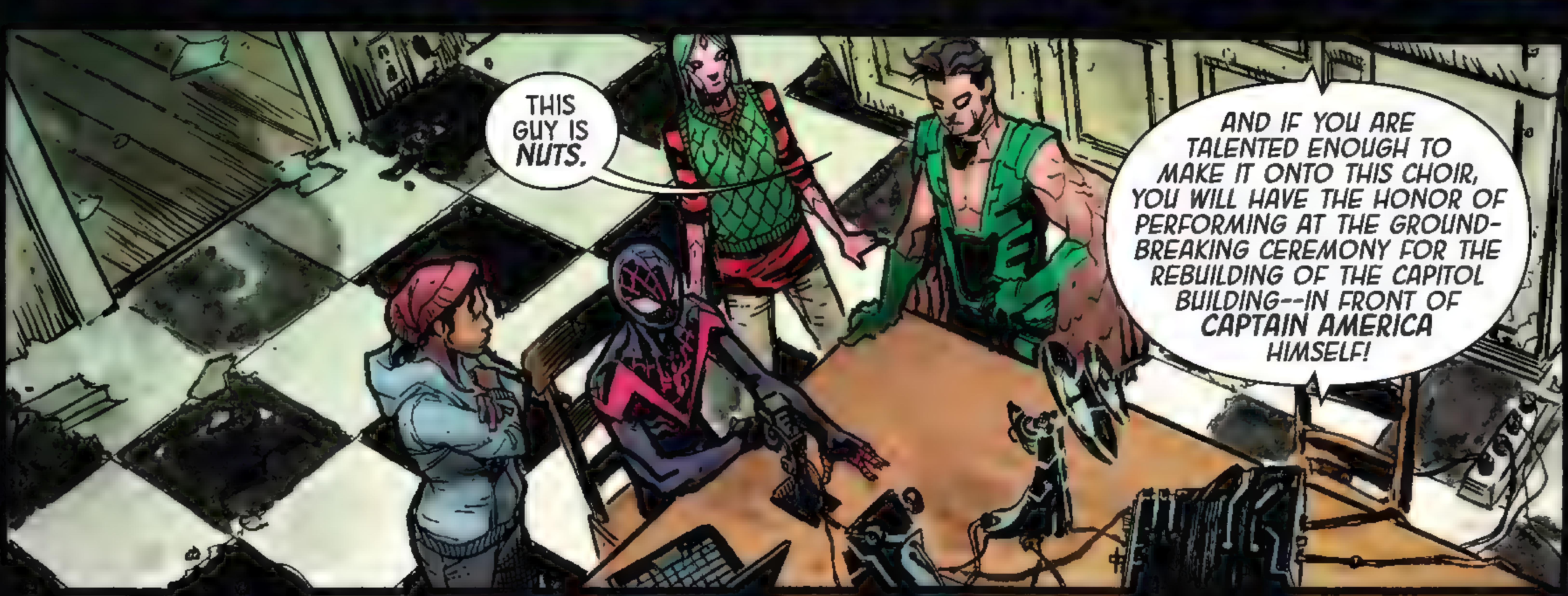
10:36 P.M.
WHAT DO YOU THINK IT'LL BE LIKE?
I MEAN, "ETHICAL ADJUSTMENT"--WHAT EVEN *IS* THAT?
STANDARD RED ROOM STUFF. MAKES PEOPLE MEAN. TEACHES YOU NOT TO HELP OTHERS.
HOW DO YOU TEACH PEOPLE *NOT* TO HELP OTHERS? IS SHE GONNA, LIKE, KICK A *PUPPY* AND WE HAVE TO STAND THERE AND TAKE IT?
OH NOOO, PUPPY!
RIRI, COME IN, PLEASE.
I DIDN'T SEE ANY PUPPIES.
ALL I SAW WAS A TABLE AND CHAIRS. WHAT'S SHE GONNA DO--*TALK* TO US?
HOW TOUGH CAN *THAT* BE?

RIRI?
SPIDER-MAN, YOU'RE NEXT.

CHICAGO.
SATURDAY. 9:18 A.M.
THIS IS AWESOME. HEY, ISN'T THIS *AWESOME?* THIS IS SO AWESOME.
TOTALLY.
MY NAME'S RYAN NELSON. WHAT'S YOURS?
AMADEUS. AMADEUS PARK.
HI, AMADEUS. ARE YOU GOING FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP? MY DAD SAYS A HYDRA SCHOLARSHIP WOULD MEAN THEY'D *HAVE* TO ACCEPT ME WHEN I'M OLD ENOUGH.
WOULDN'T THAT BE *AWESOME?* HE SAYS ONE DAY I COULD BE FIGHTING ALONGSIDE CAPTAIN AMERICA *HIMSELF.*
AMADEUS--
CODENAMES OVER THE AIRWAVES, REMEMBER?
RIGHT, YEAH.
HULK, YOU GOTTA BE MORE *CONVINCING.* YOU GOTTA *SELL* THIS, MAN.
HE SAYS CAPTAIN AMERICA IS A TRUE AMERICAN *HERO.* HE SAYS IT TOOK SOMEONE LIKE HIM TO SNAP US ALL OUT OF *THE GREAT ILLUSION.*
Y'KNOW WHAT WE *WERE,* BEFORE CAPTAIN AMERICA WOKE US UP? *DO* YOU?
DUDE!
...WE WERE *WEAK.*
THAT'S *RIGHT,* MAN!
WE WERE WEAK, BUT NOW WE HAVE CAPTAIN AMERICA TO SHOW US THE WAY. CAPTAIN AMERICA AND HYDRA.
HAIL HYDRA, AMADEUS!
HAIL HYDRA.


WELCOME, CHILDREN!
I AM *THE CHOIRMASTER!*
BY WALKING THROUGH THESE DOORS, YOU HAVE TOLD US SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF! YOU HAVE TOLD US THAT YOU ARE *STRONG!* THAT YOU ARE *PROUD!* THAT YOU ARE ONE OF *US!*
AND IN THE NEXT THREE DAYS, YOU WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO *PROVE* THAT.
THIS IS *CHOIR BOOTCAMP!* YOU WILL *EAT, SLEEP* AND *SING* HERE. YOUR PHONES WILL BE *CONFISCATED.* YOUR NUMBERS WILL BE *WHITTLED DOWN* UNTIL THERE ARE A MERE *48* OF YOU.
I WILL *HONE* YOUR VOICES. THE SONGS YOU SING WILL MAKE THE HEAVENS THEMSELVES *WEEP WITH JOY.*
IT WON'T BE *EASY.* I REQUIRE DEDICATION FROM *EVERY ONE* OF YOU. I REQUIRE *DEVOTION.*


CHOIR IS NOT ABOUT STANDING ON A STAGE AND *SINGING.* CHOIR IS *BEAUTY.* CHOIR IS *LIFE.*
SHOW ME THAT DEVOTION, AND I WILL SHOW YOU HOW TO UNRAVEL THE *MYSTERIES OF EXISTENCE.*


THIS GUY IS *NUTS.*
AND IF YOU ARE TALENTED ENOUGH TO MAKE IT ONTO THIS CHOIR, YOU WILL HAVE THE HONOR OF PERFORMING AT THE GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE REBUILDING OF THE CAPITOL BUILDING--IN FRONT OF **CAPTAIN AMERICA** *HIMSELF!*

DID YOU *KNOW* THAT?
I KNEW IT WAS A *POSSIBILITY.*
TO PERFORM IN FRONT OF CAPTAIN AMERICA IS TO BE WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE.
YOU SAID YOU'D TRAIN US AS *SPIES*, NOT *ASSASSINS.*
NADIA IS *NOT* GONNA LIKE THIS...
YOU CAME TO *ME*, REMEMBER? THAT MEANS IT'S *MY* RULES, AND IN THE *RED ROOM*, WE DON'T QUESTION OUR *SUPERIORS.*
KEEP AN EYE ON OUR AGENTS IN THE FIELD. HYDRA WILL BE SCANNING FOR COMMUNICATIONS, SO YOU'LL NEED TO KEEP THE SIGNAL *FLUCTUATING.*
BACK TO WORK, LITTLE REVOLUTIONARIES.
SUNDAY. 8:27 A.M.
I WENT TO SCHOOL WITH ONE.
NO!
YEP. GREGORY BOLLARD. HE DID THAT GROSS *COCOON THING* IN THE MIDDLE OF HOMEROOM. PEOPLE WERE *FREAKING OUT.*
THE WHOLE SCHOOL WAS EVACUATED. HE COULD'VE BEEN A *BOMB*, Y'KNOW? COULD'VE KILLED US *ALL.*
LIKE, THE SCARY THING IS, THEY COULD BE *ANYONE.*
YOUR BEST FRIEND COULD BE AN INHUMAN AND YOU'D HAVE NO IDEA UNTIL THEY TURNED INTO A *MONSTER.*
HEY, GRETCHEN, I'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU LATER.
DOOFUS.

MORNING, AMMY. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE ROBES?
DON'T YOU FEEL LIKE AN EVIL EMPEROR PLOTTING TO TAKE OVER THE GALAXY?
GUESS THEY *ARE* KINDA PALPATINE-ESQUE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS.
I SEE YOU'RE MAKING FRIENDS.
I'M BLENDING IN. LIKE WE'RE *SUPPOSED* TO.
IT'S JUST--I DON'T KNOW WHAT *ELSE* WE'RE SUPPOSED TO DO. SPYING IS *ONE THING*, BUT IF WIDOW THINKS WE'RE GOING TO--
I'M SURE SHE DOESN'T.
THEN WHY ARE WE *HERE?* WHY'D SHE *PUT* US HERE?
I GET THAT WE'RE ONLY ONE *PIECE* OF THE MISSION. I GET THAT THERE ARE THINGS SHE'S TOLD US AND THINGS SHE HASN'T.
THAT'S PART OF BEING A *SPY.*
BUT I DON'T WANT TO *HURT* ANYONE, AMMY.
YOU WON'T HAVE TO.
LISTEN TO ME. WE WEAR THE ROBES, WE BLEND IN, WE AGREE WITH IDIOTS AND WE COMPLETE THE MISSION.
WE GOT THROUGH THE AUDITIONS *YESTERDAY.* NOW WE HAVE TO GET THROUGH *TODAY.* CAN YOU DO THAT?
I CAN. CAN YOU?
OF COURSE I CAN. I'M THE GREATEST SINGER THERE IS.

YESTERDAY WAS *PROMISING*. THERE IS *POTENTIAL* HERE. THIS GLADDENS ME.
YOU WILL NOTICE THAT SOME OF YOUR FELLOW HOPEFULS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SENT *HOME*. WHERE THEY FAILED, *YOU* MUST SUCCEED.
WE HAVE SOME OF THE BEST SINGING COACHES IN THE STATE TO *HELP YOU*. I WOULD ADVISE YOU SEEK THEM OUT. THE THEME FOR TODAY WILL BE *PATRIOTIC HYMNS*.
NOW--I UNDERSTAND THERE WAS A DEGREE OF *BOISTEROUSNESS* LAST NIGHT.
I CAN UNDERSTAND THIS. YOU'RE TEENAGERS, AWAY FROM HOME, ALL GIDDY WITH EXCITEMENT...BUT CHOIR MEANS *DISCIPLINE*. IT REQUIRES *ORDER*.
SO I HAVE ENLISTED THE HELP OF SOME OF YOUR *PEERS*.
CHILDREN, MEET *THE FREELANCERS*.
AMADEUS, DON'T YOU KNOW THEM?
SERIOUSLY? THOSE CREEPS WHO KEEP TRYING TO SCREW OVER THE CHAMPIONS?
THEY KNOW MY FACE. THEY'LL RECOGNIZE ME.
STAY COOL, HULK. WE'LL TALK TO WIDOW. SHE'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO.

I'M PULLING HIM *OUT.*
WHAT?
BUT...YOU CAN'T LEAVE NADIA IN THERE *ALONE.*
NADIA'S MAINTAINING HER *COVER.* SHE CAN *HANDLE IT.*
BLACK WIDOW, *WAIT.*
WHAT IF WE COULD COME UP WITH SOMETHING TO *DISGUISE* AMADEUS' FACE? WE HAVE *IMAGE-INDUCING TECH,* RIGHT?
NOT *HERE.*
THEN WE'LL MAKE IT OURSELVES! IT WON'T BE *FLASHY,* BUT IT'LL DO THE JOB.
YOU CAN MAKE THAT?
TRUST ME. TRUST *US.*
YOU HAVE UNTIL NIGHTFALL.
AND YOU'D BETTER HOPE THAT AMADEUS STAYS OUT OF *SIGHT* 'TIL THEN.

3:18 P.M.
AMERICA! AMERRRRICA!
OH GOD OH GOD OH GOD
GOD SHED HIS GRACE ON THEE!
THAT'S QUITE ENOUGH *SHRIEKING*, THANK YOU.
WELL-- MAYBE THE *OTHER* VOICES WILL DROWN *YOURS* OUT.
FINE, YOU'RE THROUGH.
NEXT!
DID YOU HEAR WHAT HE *SAID?*
WHAT AM I GONNA *DO*, NADIA? I'M UP NEXT! THEY'RE GONNA SEE ME!
RELAX, OKAY? LEAVE IT TO ME.
I'LL GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO *SHRIEK* ABOUT.

THAT, CHILD, WAS *TERRIBLE.*
I'VE HEARD SOME *BAD SINGING* IN MY TIME, BUT THAT WAS LIKE YOU WERE PURPOSEFULLY TRYING TO *HURT ME.*
YOU'RE OUT. MY STANDARDS MAY BE SLIPPING, BUT THEY HAVEN'T YET SLIPPED TO *YOUR* LEVEL. WHO'S NEXT?
AMADEUS PARK, SIR.
AH, MR. PARK! EXCELLENT!
MR. PARK? *PARK!*
YES, SIR! I'M HERE!
LET'S SEE-- *"MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE."* OKAY, IN YOUR OWN TIME. BY WHICH I MEAN *NOW.*
UM, YES SIR.
MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF--
STOP STOP *STOP!*
WHAT HAVE MY INSTRUCTORS TOLD YOU ABOUT *PROJECTION, EH?* FROM THE *DIAPHRAGM.*
AGAIN.

SWEET LAND OF--
STOP! WHO DESIGNED THOSE ROBES, EH? THE HOODS WERE A TERRIBLE IDEA.
YOU DESIGNED THEM, CHOIRMAS--
SILENCE! PARK, TAKE DOWN THE HOOD AND START AGAIN!
... THE HOOD, SIR?
TAKE IT DOWN!
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!
WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING ON?
A RAT! A RAT!
HA!
AWW, A LITTLE MOUSEY HAS YOU SCARED?
NOT A MOUSE! A RAT!
AREN'T YOU A BIT OLD TO BE--?

ISN'T HE THE CUTEST?!
EEEEEEE!
OH, DEAR GOD!
GROSS GROSS GROSS!
I'M SURROUNDED BY IDIOTS.
PARK! MY PATIENCE IS--
♫ LAND WHERE MY FATHERS DIED, LAND OF THE PILGRIMS' PRIDE... ♫
♫ ...FROM EV'RY MOUNTAINSIDE LET FREEDOM RING. ♫
EXCELLENT.

9:03 P.M.
OW! LET GO!
THOSE ARE SOME NICE SNEAKERS YOU'RE WEARING, TOAD-BOY. YOUR MOM PULL THEM FROM A DUMPSTER?
HA! DUMPSTER!
I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING TO YOU GUYS.
DID WE SAY YOU DID? WHAT'RE YOU ACCUSING US OF?
YOU SAYING WE'RE MAKING UP LIES ABOUT YOU? YOU CALLING US LIARS, TOAD-BOY?
HEY!

WHAT THE *HELL* DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOIN'?
N-NOTHING. WE WERE JUST--
YOU WANNA *PICK* ON SOMEONE, TOUGH GUY? PICK ON *ME.*
GO AHEAD. *I DARE YOU.*
YEAH, THAT'S WHAT I *THOUGHT.*
GET OUT OF MY SIGHT.
TH-THANK YOU.
DISH MENU
SINGING LESSONS by Katelynn
IT'S PAST CURFEW, KID. BETTER GET TO BED.

I SWEAR, MIGHT, THOSE HYDRA GUYS GIVE ME THE CREEPS. AND THEIR UNIFORMS *SUCK*. GREEN AND YELLOW? *PLEASE*.
WELL, THEY'RE PAYIN' US *THE BIG BUCKS*, PANIC. LONG AS THE CHECKS KEEP ROLLIN' IN, I DON'T GIVE A *DAMN* WHAT THEY WEAR.
STILL, THOUGH, YOU GOTTA *WONDER*. Y'KNOW. ABOUT THE WHOLE *ETHICAL* QUESTION.
THE *WHAT?*
YOU HIT YOUR *HEAD OR SOMETHING*, HOTNESS?
JUST SAYIN', WE'RE HELPING OUT A BUNCH OF PEOPLE WHO ESPOUSE FASCIST DOGMA.
FASCIST DOGMA, MAN.
WE'RE *CAPITALIST MERCENARIES*, HOTNESS, AND WE ALL VOTED TO TAKE THE JOB. *YOUR* HAND WAS FIRST IN THE AIR.
OF COURSE IT WAS, MIGHT, 'CAUSE I LIKE *MONEY*. DON'T MEAN I HAVE TO LIKE WHAT WE'RE *DOIN'*.
DAMN, I LOOK GOOD TONIGHT.
ANYONE *ELSE* OBJECT TO OUR CURRENT *PAYING GIG* ON *ETHICAL GROUNDS?*
YEAH, WELL, JUST KEEP THAT TO *YOURSELVES*, ALL RIGHT? YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN POWERED PEOPLE STAND UP TO THESE JOKERS. 'MEMBER VEGAS?
WE'RE NOT THE *GOOD GUYS* HERE.
WE LEAVE THE STUPID STUFF TO THE *HEROES*.

HULK! GOOD NEWS! WE HAVE THE IMAGE-INDUCER!
ABOUT TIME, YOU GUYS.
WE JUST NEED TO GET IT TO YOU.
HULK, THIS IS VIV.
YES, VIV, I KNOW.
HAVE YOU DETECTED ANY FLAWS IN THE HYDRA SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS?
IT'S PRETTY TIGHT, BUT WASP CAN SHRINK DOWN AND MEET YOU WHEREVER--
ZZK!
WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE'D HE GO?
WE HAVE EXHAUSTED THE AVAILABLE FREQUENCIES.
I AM AFRAID THAT IF WE TRY TO INITIATE CONTACT AGAIN, OUR SIGNAL WILL BE DISCOVERED.
SO WHAT NOW?
IF WE CAN'T COORDINATE WITH THEM, BLACK WIDOW WON'T LET US RISK HANDING *THIS* OVER.
THEN WE DON'T ASK FOR *PERMISSION.*
DO YOU SUGGEST INSUBORDINATION? IS THAT WISE?
WE'RE THEIR *SUPPORT,* AREN'T WE? WE SUPPORT THEM.
WE GET IN THERE, GIVE AMADEUS THE INDUCER AND GET OUT. AND WE DO IT ALL WITHOUT THE BAD GUYS *NOTICING.*
ALL RIGHT, THEN. WE'RE GOING TO CHICAGO.
"WHO DRIVES?"

CHICAGO.
PAST THEIR BEDTIME.
SPIDER-MAN, WAIT.
YEAH, I'M DETECTING IT TOO.
WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU DETECTING?
AN ALARM SYSTEM. SOPHISTICATED.
I CAN DAMPEN IT IF I FOCUS, BUT I WILL NEED TO STAY OUTSIDE TO DO SO. YOU WILL HAVE TO CONTINUE WITHOUT ME.
ALL RIGHT THEN, LOOKS LIKE WE BREAK IN THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY.
I'M SEEING MULTIPLE ARMED GUARDS. LIKE, MULTIPLE MULTIPLE. THIRTY-TWO TO BE EXACT, WITH A FURTHER NINE UNARMED ADULTS AND THE FREELANCERS.
AND YOU WANT TO SNEAK PAST ALL OF THEM?
YOUR SUIT HAS A STEALTH MODE, DOESN'T IT?
DOES IT?
IT DOES, BUT THAT WORKS BEST WHEN I'M FLYING, NOT TIP-TOEING.

CRREEEAAAAKKKKK
?
I CAN'T DO IT. THE SUIT'S TOO HEAVY. YOU'LL HAVE TO LEAVE ME HERE.
FIRE
AND THEN THERE WERE *TWO*, HUH?
THERE'S DEFINITELY SOMETHING TO BE SAID FOR BEING SNEAKY--
WHACK
DUDE!

WHAT THE *HELL?!*
RELAX, OKAY? I'LL STASH HIM SOMEWHERE, THEN CATCH UP TO YOU.
NO, LISTEN, I'LL GO ON ALONE.
I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN TURN *INVISIBLE,* AFTER ALL.
LOOK AT YOU, BEING ALL *TAKE-CHARGE* 'N STUFF.
"GO *GET 'EM, SPIDEY!*"
EXIT
HULK.
ZZT
WASP. YOU READ ME?
SPIDEY?
THIS ISN'T THE BANDWITH WE'VE BEEN USING. HOW ARE YOU WITHIN RANGE?
I'M HERE, GUYS. IN THE BUILDING, UPPER FLOOR. I HAVE THE **INDUCER.**
MEET US AT THE NORTH STAIRWELL.
SURE, SURE.
WHICH WAY'S **NORTH?**

SPIDEY? YOU HERE?
ARE YOU CLOAKED?
ARE YOU MOONING ME?
I'M NOT MOONING YOU.
HERE'S THE INDUCER.
WE COULD ONLY GET IT TO WORK FOR 30 SECONDS AT A TIME, THEN IT TAKES *ANOTHER* 30 SECONDS TO RECHARGE--BUT IT SHOULD BE ENOUGH SO LONG AS THEY ONLY GET TO *GLIMPSE* YOU.
CAN YOU HANDLE THAT?
YIKES!
I'LL HAVE TO, WON'T I?
HEY!
UH--
--OH.
HELP! IT'S SPIDER-MAN!
UNF!
NADIA'S WORKING WITH HIM!
HEY! UNCOOL!

BOOM
KRRRSSCHH
STOP THEM! STOP--
BACKUP! SEND BACKUP!
VZZNN
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CHOIR! COME WITH US! THIS IS A *RESCUE!*
C'MERE, YOU LITTLE TWERP!

OUTTA THE WAY, KID!
YOU DON'T WANT TO BE A PART OF THIS! YOU DON'T WANT TO BE A PART OF *HYDRA!*
MMMFFF
GRRARGH!
TAKE A STAND FOR *FREEDOM,* FOR *DEMOCRACY,* FOR THE TRUE *AMERICAN WAY!*
I GET IT, OKAY? I DO! YOU'RE LOST! YOU'RE DISENFRANCHISED! YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOMEWHERE TO BELONG!
UGH!
BUT HYDRA ISN'T THE *ANSWER!* HYDRA ISN'T--
URRKK!
OH, JUST *SHUT THE HELL UP!*

THINGS ARE GONNA GET *CRISPY!*
HUH? WHERE'D SHE GO?
UP *HERE,* SPARKY.
KICKFACE!
SORRY ABOUT THIS, BUG BOY, BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME HERE.
YEAH--
HE GETS THAT A *LOT.*
UNNNN!
HEY.

WE REALLY GOTTA GO, GUYS!
I DETECT MORE HYDRA TROOPS CLOSING ON OUR POSITION.
COME ON! WE'LL TAKE YOU ALL TO SAFETY!
YOU THINK WE'D GO WITH YOU?
I HOPE YOU DIE.
SPIDEY--

WE'RE OUTTA HERE!
THWIPP
CRASSHH
NICE SPEECH, BY THE WAY.
YOU THINK SO?
NO.
WAY TO GO, KID. GUESS THERE'S NO TELLIN' WHO TO TRUST THESE DAYS, *HUH?*
GUESS NOT.
MAN, THE HYDRA BRASS'RE GONNA LOVE *YOU.*
MONDAY. **3:54 P.M.**
LAST NIGHT'S EVENTS ARE A FURTHER DEMONSTRATION, IF ONE WERE NEEDED, OF HOW VIGILANT WE MUST REMAIN.
YOU, THE LAST 48, MY *CHOIR*-- YOU HAVE MADE ME PROUD. YOU HAVE IMPRESSED ME, AND *THE HIGH COUNCIL,* SO MUCH THAT WE HAVE A *SPECIAL GUEST* THIS AFTEROON.
CHILDREN, ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE--

--VIPER!
SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF HYDRA, IT IS MY *HONOR* TO ADDRESS YOU THIS DAY!
I HAVEN'T YET HAD THE *PLEASURE* OF HEARING YOU SING, BUT THE CHOIRMASTER ASSURES ME THAT YOUR PERFORMANCE AT THE GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY WILL INSPIRE US *ALL*. YOUR VOICES WILL LIFT THE COUNTRY AS *ONE*. YOUR SONGS WILL PAINT THE *FUTURE*.
BUT OUR GRAND DESTINY WILL NOT BE REACHED WITHOUT *HARDSHIPS*. WITHOUT...*BETRAYALS*. AND SO IT GLADDENS ME TO LEARN THAT ONE OF YOUR NUMBER HAS ALREADY *PROVEN* HIMSELF.
TODAY, YOU ALL SHARE IN HIS GLORY.
THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU, THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CHOIR, ARE YOUR *FRIENDS*. KEEP THEM *STRONG*. LET THEM KEEP *YOU* STRONG. TO *FALTER* IS TO *DIE*.
HAIL HYDRA, MY FRIENDS.
HAIL HYDRA!
HAIL HYDRA!
HAIL HYDRA!
HAIL HYDRA!
HAIL HYDRA!
HAIL HYDRA!
TO BE CONTINUED IN
SECRET EMPIRE

SECRET EMPIRE™

UNDERGROUND

#1

WHITLEY
KODA
FABELA

MARVEL

ANTARCTICA. MINUTES FROM THE SOUTH POLE.
LOOK, THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE LIKE THE LAST ONE. WE SHOULD BE IN AND OUT.
WE KNOW WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE. WE GO IN. WE CONVINCE HIM TO GIVE US THE COSMIC CUBE SHARD. WE GET OUT.
QUESTIONS?
YEAH, SO WHEN YOU SAY DINOSAURS, YOU MEAN THAT FIGURATIVELY, RIGHT?
NO, LANG. LITERAL DINOSAURS STILL ROAM THE SAVAGE LAND. IDIOT.
VERILY! THERE IS NO QUEST HERCULES ENJOYS MORE THAN RETRIEVING TREASURE FROM DRAGONS.
SCOTT LANG, A.K.A. ANT-MAN. SHRINKS, GROWS, STEALS, GETS CAUGHT, REFORMS.
PIETRO MAXIMOFF, A.K.A. QUICKSILVER. RUNS FAST. RUNS HIS MOUTH EVEN FASTER.
HERCULES, A.K.A. HERACLES. SON OF ZEUS. DEMIGOD. TANK.
WHO'S THE GUY AND WHY'S HE GONNA GIVE THE SHARD TO US?
SAM WILSON, F.K.A. CAPTAIN AMERICA, F.K.A. FALCON. FLIES. FIGHTS. HAS HAD A ROUGH FEW MONTHS.
SAURON. ESSENTIALLY HE'S PART DINOSAUR AND ALL JERK.
REAL EGO-MANIAC. DRAINS LIFE OUT OF PEOPLE TO MAKE HIMSELF STRONGER.
TONY, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE FLYING THE PLANE.
I AM... REMOTELY. LISTEN, IT'LL BE FINE. WE'RE--
BOBBI MORSE, A.K.A. MOCKINGBIRD. LADY ACTION SCIENTIST. AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. HITS THINGS WITH BATTLE STAVES.
A.I. TONY STARK, A.K.A. IRON MAN. ACTUALLY IN A COMA. BUILT AN A.I. OF HIMSELF SO WE COULD ALL ENJOY HIM AFTER HE'S GONE. UNIRONICALLY CALLS OTHER PEOPLE "REAL EGOMANIAC."
THUD
TONY!
THAT WAS NOT ME! THAT WAS--

BOBBI, YOU'RE GONNA WANT TO SEE THIS.
OH, COME ON! WHAT IS THIS?!
I GUESS THEY DIDN'T GET THE MEMO ABOUT THIS BEING THE EASY MISSION.
SHUT UP AND LAND THIS THING BEFORE ONE OF THEM CRASHES INTO THE ENGINE.
YES, MA'AM. JUST CALL ME SULLY.

SEE? EASY DOES IT. DIDN'T EVEN NEED THE HUDSON.
DO YOU EVER STOP? IS THERE AN OFF SWITCH SOMEWHERE?
WELL, THINK HOW LUCKY YOU ARE THAT I'M STAYING HERE.
YOU'RE WHAT NOW?
THE SAVAGE LAND HAS A WEIRD EFFECT ON ELECTRONICS AND SEEING AS I CURRENTLY *AM* ELECTRONICS--
--FINE. EVERYBODY ELSE, LET'S GET GOING.
WHO DECIDED SHE WAS THE LEADER? WHY NOT YOU, LANG? YOU'RE A THIEF, AFTER ALL.
WHEN IT COMES TO LEADING A HEIST ON SOME KIND OF DINOSAUR VAMPIRE, MOCKINGBIRD HAS MY VOTE.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, *CAPTAIN AMERICA?*
DON'T CALL ME THAT.
OH, HAVE I HIT A NERVE? YOU SEEMED RATHER PROUD OF THAT COSTUME BEFORE YOUR BEST FRIEND DECIDED TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD.
I'M GONNA TELL YOU ONCE, PIETRO, I'M THE WRONG ONE TO START WITH. NOBODY'S LOST MORE THAN I.
NOBODY?
I'D JUST AS SOON KILL ROGERS, BUT HIS PET DEMON HAS MY SISTER UNDER HIS CONTROL AND IF WE KILL ROGERS THERE'S NO GUARANTEE WE'LL GET HER BACK.
GET OUTTA MY FACE, PIETRO.
OOF!

WHAT THE--
DIE, AVENGER!
I KNEW YOU WERE BEHIND IT! I KNEW IT!
GET OFFA ME!
FELL BEAST, HERCULES SAYS--
LOOK IN MY EYES, OAF. THOSE ARE NOT YOUR FRIENDS, BUT MONSTERS!
THEY'RE MONSTERS.
YES, AND YOU WANT TO DESTROY THEM, DON'T YOU?
YES.
HAVE AT THEE, MONSTERS!

MOVE IT! SAURON'S GOT HERC HYPNOTIZED.
AS IF WE NEEDED REMINDING HE HAS A WEAK MIND.
NOT A GREAT TIME TO INSULT THE ARMED DEMIGOD, QUICKSILVER!
HIS STRENGTH IS NO OBJECT, HE WILL HAVE TO CATCH--
THUMP
OOF!
WITH YOUR TEAM BUSY, SAURON CAN SUCK YOU DRY OF LIFE FORCE!
YOU'RE ABOUT TO BE SUCKING ON MY BATTLE STAVES.
THEN I SHALL USE YOUR ENERGY TO DESTROY YOUR SERVANTS WHO HAVE STOLEN MY THRONE!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT! GET OFF ME!
LIAR! I SHALL HANG YOUR HEAD ABOVE MY THRONE AS A WARNING TO THOSE WHO COME AFTER!
FOR THE RECORD...

...HANGING A GIRL'S HEAD ON THE WALL IS AT LEAST A TENTH DATE THING.
SHOOM
YAY, I CONTRIBUTED! I NEVER EVEN HAD TO LEAVE THE PLANE.
HEY! WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO MY HEAD?
YOU NEARLY BEHEADED ME, YOU FOOL!
WELL, THIS IS GOING GREAT.
NOW, YOU KIDS GET OFF MY LAWN.
WHAT WAS HE GOING ON ABOUT? HE THOUGHT WE WERE BEHIND SOMETHING?
I HAVE NO IDEA.
BUT I'M SURE ABOUT TO FIND OUT.

WAKEY WAKEY, SUNSHINE.
UNTIE ME, VILE WOMAN! I WILL DRAIN YOUR LIFE FORCE AND HYPNOTIZE YOU INTO CUTTING YOUR OWN TONGUE OUT.
I DON'T THINK SO. TAKE A MINUTE TO ASSESS YOUR SITUATION.
WE'RE HERE TO FIND A SHARD. SHINY, SILVERY, LOOKS MAGICAL. WE THOUGHT YOU'D HAVE IT...
BUT THOSE SHORTS DON'T LEAVE MUCH TO THE IMAGINATION.
WHAT KIND OF GAME IS THIS? YOU GAVE THEM POWER TO BETRAY ME, NOW YOU WISH TO RUB IT IN MY FACE?
LISTEN, KARL. CAN I CALL YOU KARL? YOU'RE GONNA NEED TO START MAKING SENSE.
DO YOU MEAN THAT YOU ARE NOT BACKING THESE "NEW STEWARDS"?
I DON'T KNOW WHO THAT IS.
THE THREE MUTATE WOMEN? THE ONES WITH THE SHARD YOU SPEAK OF. WERE YOU NOT THE ONES WHO GAVE IT TO THEM?
GAVE IT TO THEM? NO, WE NEED TO TAKE IT WITH US.
HAHAHAHAHA!
I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN HE LAUGHS. MAKE HIM STOP THAT.
THEN WE WANT THE SAME THING. WE ARE *ALLIES.*
EXPLAIN.

"WHEN LAST I RETURNED TO THE SAVAGE LAND, I BROUGHT WITH ME WEAPONS LIKE THE REALM HAD NEVER SEEN.
"I CONVINCED MY MUTATES TO ASSIST ME IN RETAKING THE LAND."
"AND BY 'CONVINCED' YOU MEAN HYPNOTIZED, RIGHT?"
"ONLY FOR THOSE TOO WEAK TO RESIST."
"AND WE WERE SUCCESSFUL. IT WAS PERFECT.
"I RULED OVER THE SAVAGE LAND AS THE WISEST AND MOST POWERFUL.
"BUT THEN WITH NO WARNING, MY OWN MUTATES TURNED ON ME.
"WHITEOUT, WHO PSIONICALLY BLINDED ME.
"VERTIGO, WHO CRIPPLED MY BODY WITH SICKNESS.
"AND LUPA, WHO HAD ALWAYS COMMANDED DIRE WOLVES. BUT SHE'S GROWN STRONGER.
"SHE'S GAINED CONTROL OVER OTHER SPECIES AS WELL, LIKE THE DINOSAURS."
"SO SHE DEVELOPED NEW POWERS? THAT SOUNDS LIKE OUR SHARD."
"SHE DROVE ME FROM MY CITADEL...
"...TURNED MY PEOPLE AGAINST ME. I CAN HELP YOU GET YOUR FRAGMENT BACK IF YOU HELP ME RECLAIM MY THRONE."
"EXCUSE ME FOR A SECOND, COUNT DRACUSAUR. I GOTTA HUDDLE WITH THE TEAM."

OKAY. SO, IF WE WANT ANY CHANCE OF RESTORING STEVE, WE NEED TO GET THAT CUBE SHARD, BUT CLEARLY, SAURON IS THE BAD GUY HERE.
DO WE WORK WITH HIM AND DOOM *THIS PLACE* OR TRY TO GO ON OUR OWN AND POTENTIALLY DOOM THE *WHOLE WORLD?*
THAT FRAGMENT IS THE KEY TO LIBERATING MY SISTER. I SAY WE WORK WITH THE CREATURE.
I MEAN, HE'S AWFUL, BUT IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE WE HAVE A CHOICE.
I AM FOR ANY RESULT THAT ALLOWS ME TO WRESTLE DINOSAURS.
BOBBI, THIS IS YOUR MISSION. I TRUST YOU TO MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE.
I WAS REALLY HOPING ONE OF YOU WOULD TALK ME OUT OF THIS.
OKAY, YOU GOT A DEAL. YOU SHOW US HOW TO GET TO THIS CITADEL, WE'LL HELP GET YOU IN.
AND YOU'LL HELP ME DEFEAT THESE TRAITOROUS UNDERLING WENCHES.
WATCH IT, KARL.
LET US SHAKE HANDS AS ALLIES.
OH, NO. WE'RE NOT GONNA--
SHAKE HIS HAND! WE'VE DAWDLED LONG ENOUGH!
FINE! LET'S GET TO WO--
THERE'S A GOOD GIRL.

UGH!
ADD THAT TO THE LONG LIST OF THINGS I'M GOING TO BEAT STEVE ROGERS UP FOR.
INDEED! HE WILL HAVE MANY BEATINGS COMING HIS WAY ONCE WE FIX HIM.
DON'T GO TOO FAR! JUST BECAUSE I'M ALLIED WITH YOU DOESN'T MEAN I TRUST YOU.
IF YOU AND I HIT HIM AT THE SAME TIME, HOW FAR DO YOU THINK WE COULD GET HIM?
WERE WE TO CLEAR THE TREES, I BELIEVE WE COULD REACH THE VOLCANO.
YOU *REALLY* GET ME, HERC. I APPRECIATE THAT.
TO MAKE IT TO THE CITADEL WE MUST CROSS THROUGH A LOCAL VILLAGE.
YOU! FAST ONE! YOU WILL SCOUT AHEAD!
I DO *NOT* TAKE ORDERS FROM YOU, CREATURE.
THE WEAKEST ALWAYS MAKE SUCH A GREAT SHOW OF THEIR DEFIANCE.
QUICKSILVER! REMEMBER, THIS IS FOR WANDA.
THIS CREATURE HAD BETTER HOPE HE NEVER MEETS ME WHEN HIS SERVICES ARE NOT NEEDED.
RUN ALONG NOW, CHILD. I HAVE NO INTEREST IN YOUR EMPTY THREATS.
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D MEET SOMEBODY WHO WAS A MATCH IN A JERK COMPETITION FOR QUICKSILVER. THE WORLD REALLY IS UPSIDE DOWN.
SCOTT, CAN I TALK TO YOU A MINUTE?
SURE, BUDDY. WHAT'S UP?

LISTEN, MAN, I AIN'T TRYING TO WORRY YOU, BUT ARE YOU STILL IN TOUCH WITH CASSIE?
YEAH, WE SEND LETTERS BACK AND FORTH. THANK YOU FOR GETTING HER OUT.
DON'T. I JUST...WHAT PIETRO SAID GOT ME THINKING. DO YOU TALK ABOUT HER WITH ANY OF THE REST OF THESE GUYS?
I TRY NOT TO. EVERYBODY HAS PEOPLE WHO ARE IN DANGER. IT SEEMS... MEAN?
NO, THAT'S GOOD.
WHAT'S GOING ON, SAM? YOU'RE KINDA FREAKING ME OUT.
IT'S JUST... THIS THING WITH STEVE HAS REALLY GOT ME THINKING ABOUT WHO I CAN TRUST, YOU KNOW?
WE'RE OUT HERE TRYING TO PIECE TOGETHER THIS COSMIC CUBE--THE ONE THING THAT CAN FIX STEVE--BUT...
BUT WHAT IF WE GET IT AND SOMEBODY...
GUYS, WE'RE COMING UP ON THE VILLAGE.
SO WHAT'S THE PLAY? DO WE GO AROUND? TRY TO SNEAK A DINOSAUR MAN THROUGH TOWN?
THEY'RE NOT ALL DINOSAUR PEOPLE, RIGHT?
OF COURSE NOT! AND I WILL TELL YOU THE PLAY, ANT-HUMAN.
I WILL NOT COWER WHILE PRETENDERS TAKE MY THRONE. IF THEY WISH TO ATTACK ME, I'LL BURN DOWN THEIR WHOLE VILLAGE.
SAURON!
OKAY, I GUESS LET'S GO MAKE SURE OUR "ALLY" DOESN'T DIE OR ALSO PILLAGE AN INNOCENT VILLAGE.
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D HATE A DINOSAUR SO MUCH! I USED TO LIKE DINOSAURS.

OKAY, LET'S JUST KEEP OUR EYES ON THE PRIZE HERE, SAURON.
DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PLACATE ME, WOMAN. SAURON WILL DO AS HE PLE--
LONG LIVE THE NEW STEWARDS!
WHO SAID THAT?! I'LL HAVE THEIR HIDE FOR A RUG!
SAURON, CHILL. THIS IS THEIR HOME. LET'S JUST--
THEIR HOME?! THIS IS MY KINGDOM!
AND I'LL BURN IT BEFORE I SEE IT TAKEN FROM ME!
WHOA! LOOK OUT!
STOP IT! I SWEAR TO GOD IF YOU HURT THESE PEOPLE--
WHAT? YOU'LL ABANDON ME AND LET YOUR PRECIOUS WORLD DIE? I THINK NOT.
TEST ME!
BOBBI, THINGS JUST GOT WORSE.
HOW CAN THEY BE WORSE?
ROOOAR

SAURON! YOU AND YOUR ALLIES ARE ORDERED BY THE NEW STEWARDS OF THE SAVAGE LAND TO SURRENDER AND STAND TRIAL FOR CRIMES!
NEVER!
THOSE ARE DEFINITELY NOT FIGURATIVE!
I HATE THIS PLACE.
I HATE YOU, SAURON.
FINALLY!

HAVE AT THEE!
SQUALTCH
THAT THING JUST ATE OUR HEAVY HITTER!
FALCON! GIVE ME A LIFT!
THAT'S NOT MY NAME!
SAVE THE ANGST AND GET ME ON THAT T. REX WITH THE BIG GUY!
WATCH THE JAWS!
THAT'S WHY I DO BURPEES RIGHT THERE!
ALL RIGHT, CHUMP, THIS IS A DINO-JACKING!

OKAY, SCOTT, THIS IS THE PART WHERE YOU DON'T GET EATEN BY A T. REX! WE CAN TOTALLY DO THIS!
DEFINITELY CAN'T DO THIS! WHAT WAS I THINKING?!
WHAT FOOLISH MEN! WHAT COULD THEY HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH?
HONESTLY?
SLAM
I WAS KINDA THINKING IF I PULLED YOU OFF I WOULD--
--NOT GET BITTEN BY A DINOSAUR-- AAHHHH!!!

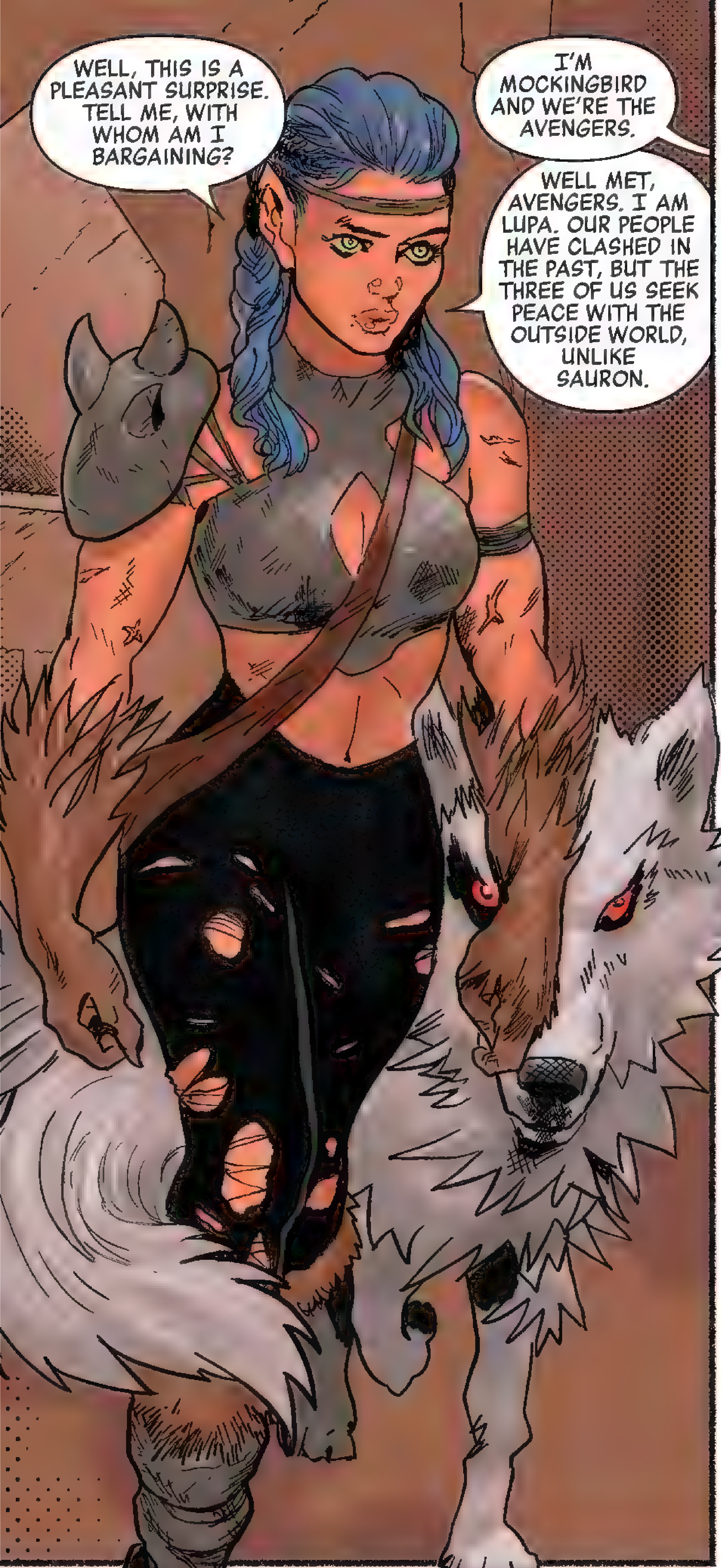
I KNOW NOT WHY YOU PLAGUE THE PEOPLE OF THE SAVAGE LAND SO, BUT YOU CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO SUCCEED.
IT'S REALLY NOT PERSONAL, YOUR LEADER JUST HAS SOMETHING WE NEED.
AND YOU WOULD ENSLAVE MY PEOPLE AGAIN FOR IT?
ENSLAVE? IT SOUNDED TO ME LIKE YOU HELPED SAURON TAKE OVER.
WE DID! BUT THEN HE BECAME GREEDY AND PARANOID. HE ENSLAVED OR IMPRISONED ANYONE WHO MIGHT DEFY HIM.
LUPA, WHITEOUT AND VERTIGO WERE ONLY ALLOWED TO REMAIN HIS SERVANTS BECAUSE THEIR POWERS WERE NO THREAT TO HIM. AND...
I REALLY HATE WHERE THIS SENTENCE IS GOING.
...BECAUSE THEY WERE DESIRABLE TO LOOK AT.
YEP, THAT WAS--
SMACK
WHAT THE WHAT?!
I HATE THIS PLAAA--

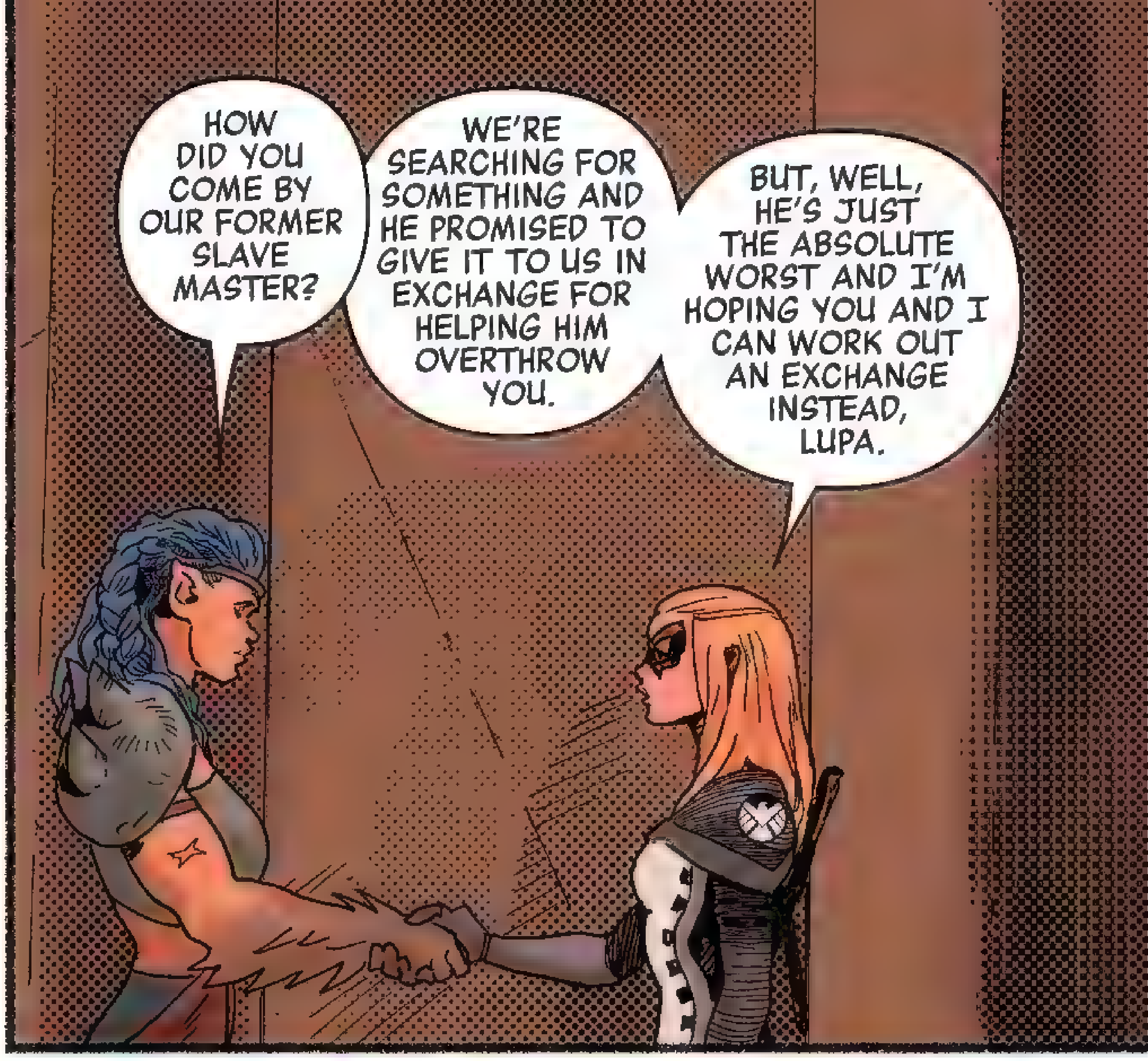
GOTCHA!
THANKS FOR THE SAVE.
GUYS, IF THIS IS NORMAL FOR A T. REX THEN I MISSED SOMETHING IN BIOLOGY. OR IS THAT HISTORY?
TRIP
WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
SEARCH ME. ONE SECOND IT WAS BITING ME, THE NEXT IT WAS STUMBLING AROUND LIKE MY UNCLE VICTOR AT BASICALLY ANY WEDDING.
WAIT, THE TOP ONE IS STILL MOVING.
WHAT THE--

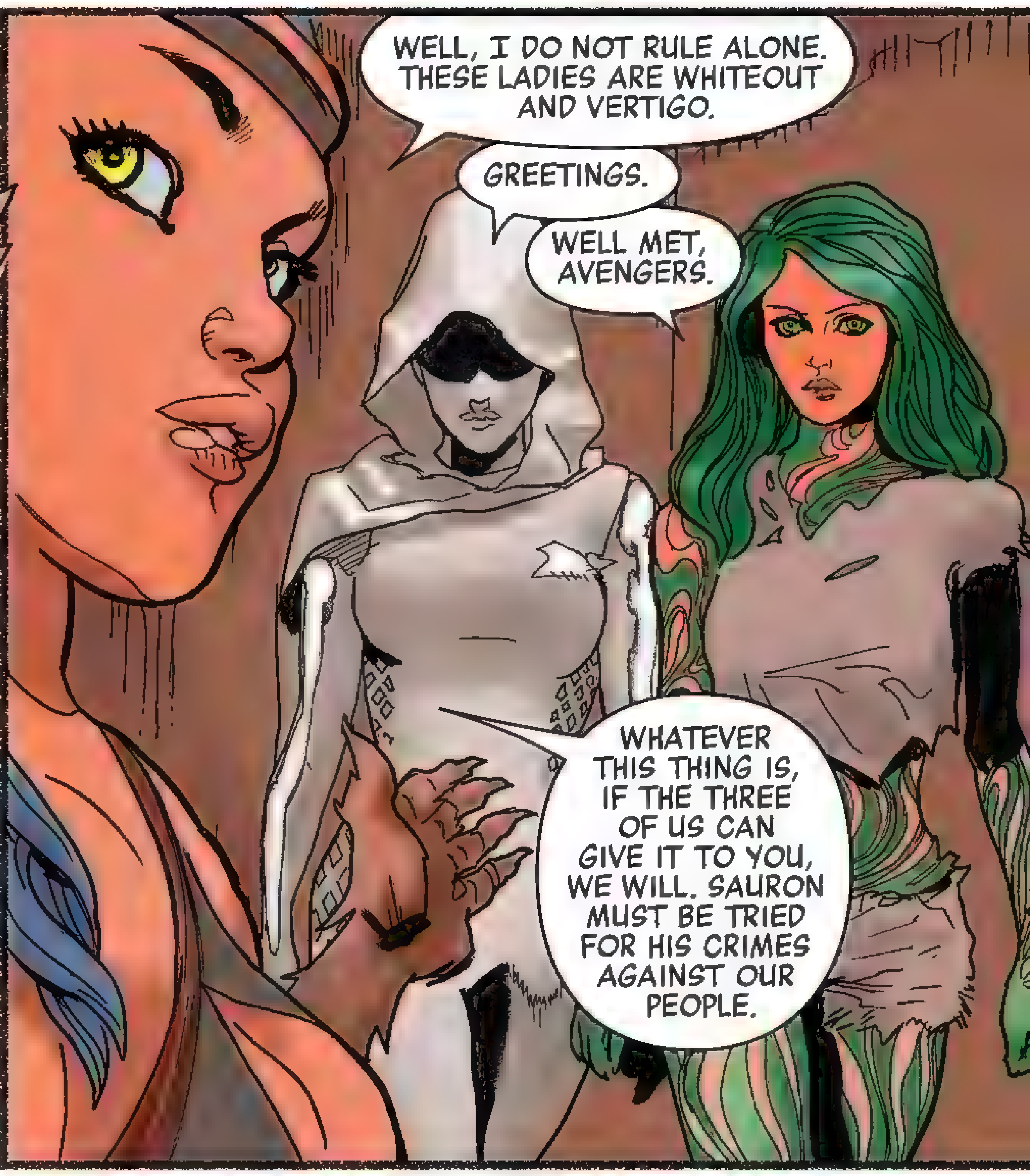
GRAA!
NOT SO MIGHTY FROM THE INSIDE, ARE YOU-- WHOA!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR AID, MIGHTY FALCON! WE ARE VICTORIOUS!
YOU LOOK PRETTY ROUGH, HERC. YOU SURE YOU CAN KEEP GOING?
VERILY! WHERE IS OUR CHARGE?
GOOD QUESTION. GET OUT HERE, SAURON!
WELL DONE, MY SERVANTS. THOUGH NEXT TIME YOU SHOULD SEE ABOUT DEFEATING THESE FOOLS FASTER.
DID SOMEONE SAY FASTER?
DON'T TELL ME YOU WERE WAITING FOR THAT CUE! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
SCOUTING FOR ENEMIES, AS REQUESTED.
WELL CLEARLY YOU MISSED A FEW, SPEEDBALL.
THAT'S NOT FUNNY, CAPTAIN FALCON.
WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR YOUR BS, PIETRO.
FUNNY--
--BECAUSE I FOUND AN UNDERGROUND PASSAGE THAT GOES RIGHT TO THIS CITADEL WE'RE LOOKING FOR.

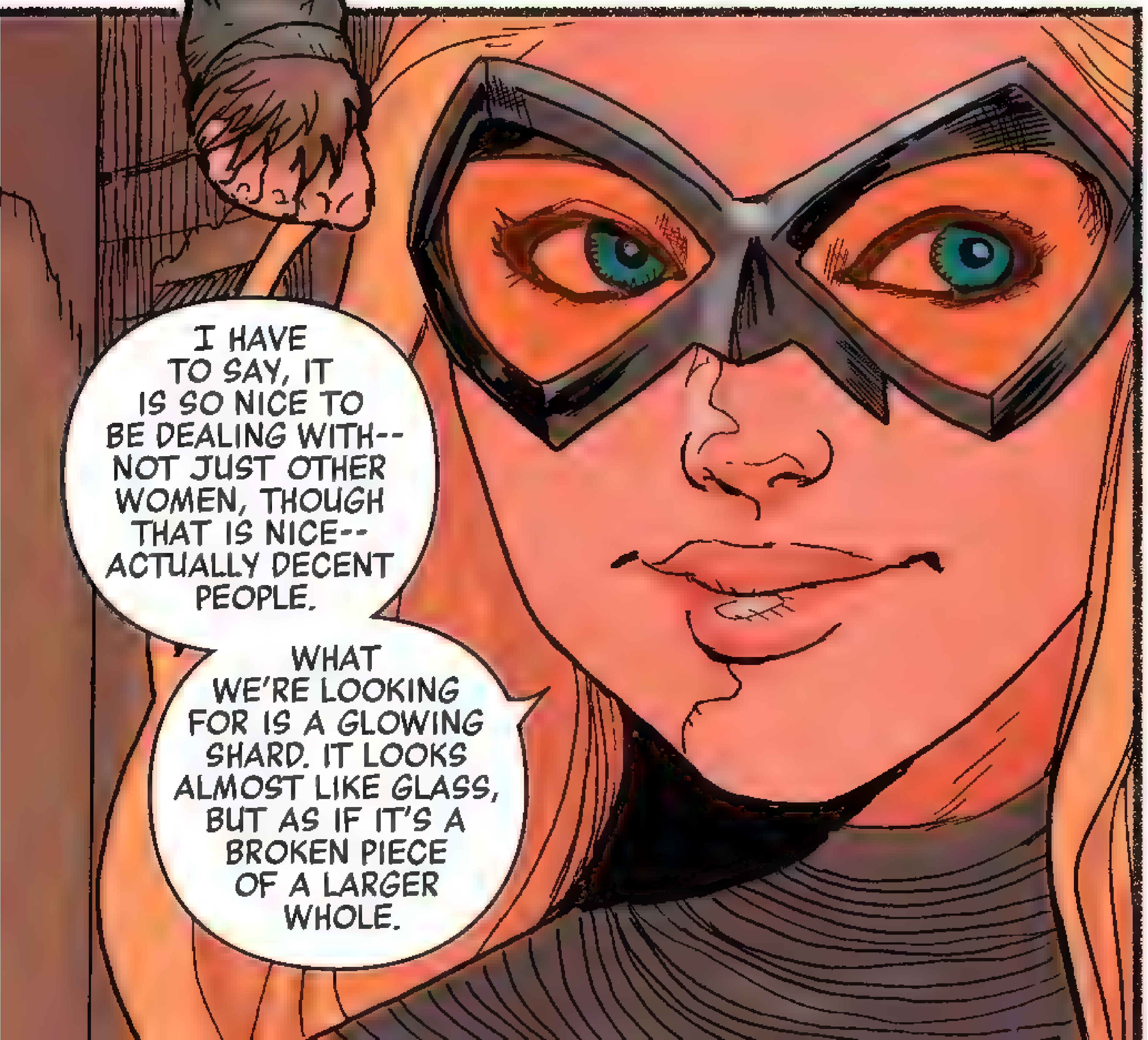
IF MY ESTIMATION IS CORRECT, THIS DOOR SHOULD LEAD TO A STAIRWELL INSIDE THE WALL OF THE CASTLE.
IT WILL BE DARK, BUT AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRWELL WILL BE A HIDDEN DOOR TO THE CITADEL.
SAURON, YOU KNOW THIS PLACE SO WHY DON'T YOU LEAD. I'LL FOLLOW RIGHT BEHIND YOU.
OF COURSE. OTHERWISE YOU FOOLS WOULD BE HOPELESS IN THIS DARK PASSAGE.
MY THOUGHTS EXACTLY. EVERYBODY TRY TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE PERSON AHEAD OF YOU, AND STAY QUIET.
HERCULES, BEHIND ME. SAM AND SCOTT AFTER THAT. QUICKSILVER, YOU CAN CATCH UP EASILY SO CLOSE THE DOOR AND FOLLOW US LAST.
I'LL LIKELY BE IN THE ROOM BEFORE HALF OF YOU.
OKAY, DINO-BIRD, YOU THINK YOU CAN PULL THOSE WINGS IN FOR THE CORRIDOR?
ARE YOU ATTEMPTING TO MOCK ME OR ARE YOU JUST TOO DULL TO KNOW THE PROPER NAMES OF DINOSAURS?
I CAN'T SAY IT COMES UP THAT OFTEN IN DAY-TO-DAY S.H.I.E.L.D. WORK. BUT I'D BE REALLY GRATEFUL IF YOU CLOSED THEM SO I DON'T FALL DOWN THE STAIRS.
SLAP
IF YOU HAD ASKED SO NICELY IN THE FIRST PLACE, THEY'D ALREADY BE CLOSED.
MY APOLOGIES. OH, THAT'S MUCH BETTER.
HEY, NOW THAT THOSE ARE CLOSED I NEED TO HOLD YOUR HAND SO I CAN FIND MY WAY.
I SEE WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO DO. YOU HAVE AT LAST FALLEN UNDER THE THRALL OF SAURON. I KNEW IT WOULD HAPPEN WITH TIME.
YOU GOT ME. I MEAN, I'VE NEVER MET ANOTHER MAN LIKE YOU, THAT'S FOR SURE.
HERE, WE ARE NEARLY ON THE LANDING, BUT YOU MAY HOLD MY HAND.
OH, I FEEL IT. WHEW, I WAS WORRIED I'D LOSE MY WAY.
FEAR NOT, WENCH, SAURON SHALL--
ZIIIP
OUCH! NOT SO TIGHT!
ZIIIP
MY WINGS! WHAT ARE YOU--?!
ZIIIP
THUD
OUCH!!

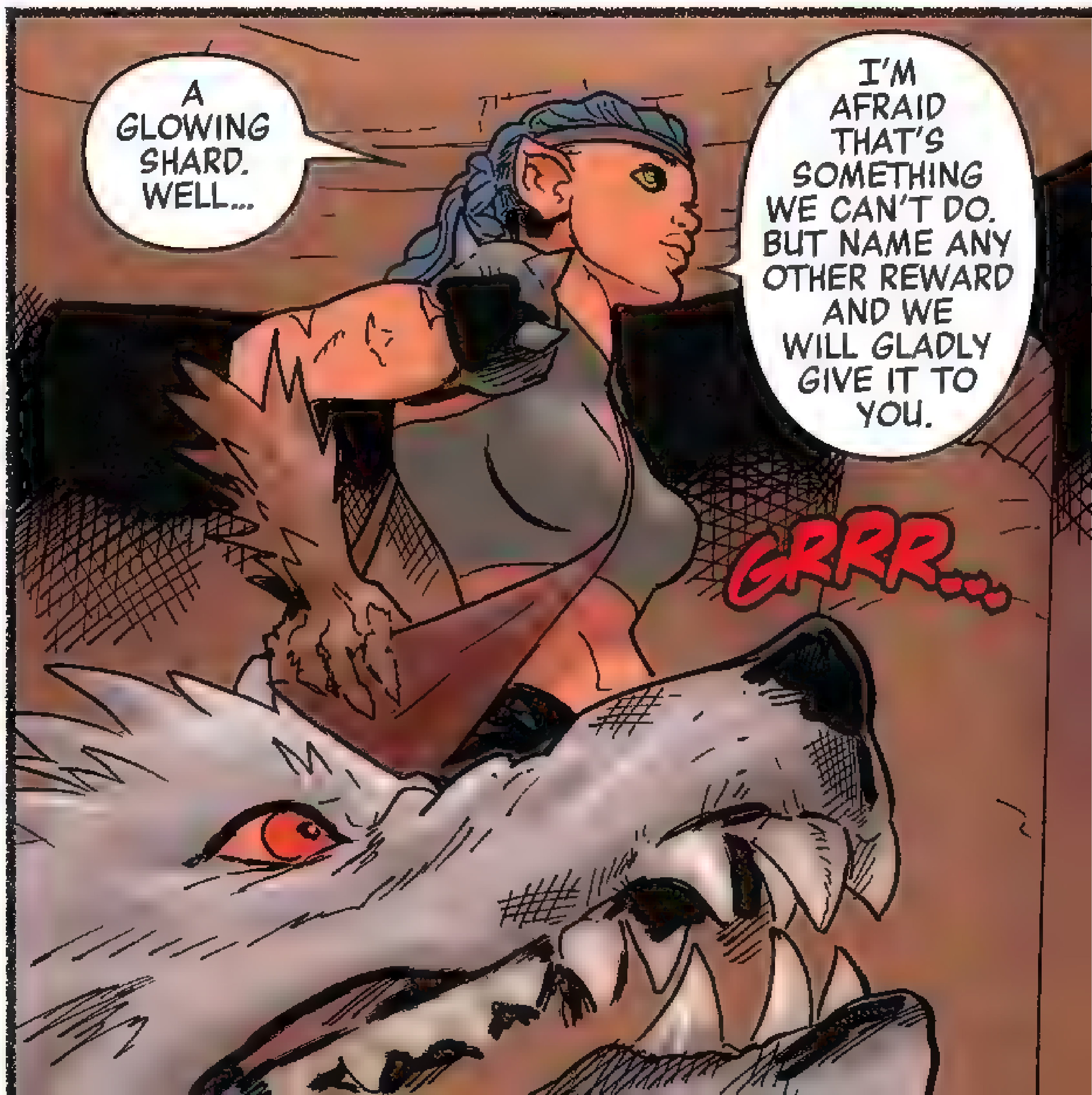
THUMP
THE MASK HAS NIGHT VISION, LOSER.
BETRAYAL! DECEPTION!
SHUFFF
DON'T ACT LIKE YOU WEREN'T GOING TO BETRAY US AS SOON AS WE DID THE DIRTY WORK.
YOUR MUTATE FRIEND ON THE T. REX TOLD ME HOW YOU TREAT YOUR ALLIES. SPEAKING OF WHICH...
STEWARDS OF THE SAVAGE LAND! I HAVE BROUGHT YOU YOUR MOST HATED ENEMY. I REQUEST A TRADE.


WELL, THIS IS A PLEASANT SURPRISE. TELL ME, WITH WHOM AM I BARGAINING?
I'M MOCKINGBIRD AND WE'RE THE AVENGERS.
WELL MET, AVENGERS. I AM LUPA. OUR PEOPLE HAVE CLASHED IN THE PAST, BUT THE THREE OF US SEEK PEACE WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD, UNLIKE SAURON.


HOW DID YOU COME BY OUR FORMER SLAVE MASTER?
WE'RE SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING AND HE PROMISED TO GIVE IT TO US IN EXCHANGE FOR HELPING HIM OVERTHROW YOU.
BUT, WELL, HE'S JUST THE ABSOLUTE WORST AND I'M HOPING YOU AND I CAN WORK OUT AN EXCHANGE INSTEAD, LUPA.


WELL, I DO NOT RULE ALONE. THESE LADIES ARE WHITEOUT AND VERTIGO.
GREETINGS.
WELL MET, AVENGERS.
WHATEVER THIS THING IS, IF THE THREE OF US CAN GIVE IT TO YOU, WE WILL. SAURON MUST BE TRIED FOR HIS CRIMES AGAINST OUR PEOPLE.


I HAVE TO SAY, IT IS SO NICE TO BE DEALING WITH-- NOT JUST OTHER WOMEN, THOUGH THAT IS NICE-- ACTUALLY DECENT PEOPLE.
WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR IS A GLOWING SHARD. IT LOOKS ALMOST LIKE GLASS, BUT AS IF IT'S A BROKEN PIECE OF A LARGER WHOLE.


A GLOWING SHARD. WELL...
I'M AFRAID THAT'S SOMETHING WE CAN'T DO. BUT NAME ANY OTHER REWARD AND WE WILL GLADLY GIVE IT TO YOU.
GRRR...

GRRR...
THAT'S NICE OF YOU AND I APPRECIATE YOUR UH...GOOD DOGGIE...
BUT THAT SHARD IS PART OF A...A PUZZLE. IF WE DON'T HAVE ALL OF THE PIECES WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SAVE OUR HOME.
I HOPE YOU, AS SOMEONE WHO ROSE UP TO SAVE YOUR OWN HOME, UNDERSTAND HOW IMPORTANT THAT IS.
I DO UNDERSTAND. BUT I DO NOT BELIEVE THE SAVING OF YOUR HOME TO BE WORTH MORE THAN THE SAVING OF MY OWN.
THIS SHARD IS WHAT GAVE US THE POWER TO OVERTHROW OUR OPPRESSORS. FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE SAVAGE LAND CAN BE AT PEACE.
YOUR LOSS PAINS ME, BUT I WILL DO WHAT IS NECESSARY TO PROTECT MY HOME.
I'M SORRY, BUT I HAVE TO INSIST. WE CAN'T LEAVE WITHOUT THAT PIECE.
THEN I'M AFRAID THE NEXT AVENGERS WHO COME HERE WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY FINDING ALL THE PIECES OF YOU.

GROOWL
ANIMAL CRUELTY WAS NOT ON MY TO-DO LIST TODAY!
BUT YOU NEVER KNOW WITH THESE THINGS.
THUNK
I HATE TO DO THIS, BECAUSE YOU ALL SEEM LIKE DECENT PEOPLE, BUT...
LET'S SEE WHAT YOUR AIR GAME IS LIKE.
SLAM
GAH!
IT'S QUITE EFFECTIVE, I'D WAGER.
GAH, WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MY HEAD?!
NEVER HAD VERTIGO BEFORE, FLYBOY?

I ALMOST FEEL SORRY FOR THE POOR CREATURES. THEY CAN'T EVEN UNDERSTAND WHAT IS STRIKING THEM.
A NOBLE SENTIMENT. PERHAPS I CAN HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND IT BETTER.
GAH!
I'M BLIND! I'M BLIND!
AND NOW FOR THE BIG ONE. WHERE DID HE--
--OOF!
ARRRR!
HAVE YOU LOCATED ME NOW, WHITE ONE?
COME, WOMAN OF WOLVES, HERCULES DESIRES A WORTHY OPPONENT!

HAVE AT THEE!
HA HA!
WELL STRUCK! WERE YOU NOT FACING HERCULES, THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A DEADLY BLOW!
WHAT MANNER OF MAN ARE YOU? I MUST HAVE ONE.
COME NOW, GIVE ME THE FRAGMENT. IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO HAVE TO INJURE SUCH A FINE WARRIOR AS YOURSELF.
YOU ARE TOO EASILY DISTRACTED BY A PRETTY FACE.
YOU OVERLOOK THE FANGS!
AAARRG!

FOR THE RECORD, I LOVE DOGS, OKAY?! THIS REALLY SUCKS!
HEY, WHERE DID SAURON GO?
SAURON!
VERTIGO, MY MOST BEAUTIFUL SERVANT, SURELY YOU WILL HELP FREE ME.
I FOUND THE CLONING TANKS, SAURON.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
FOR YEARS, I'VE HAD THESE TERRIBLE DREAMS ABOUT DYING. THEY SEEMED SO REAL.
THAT'S SILLY.
FIRST RIPTIDE, HE TORE ME OPEN. THEN, THAT HORRIBLE PREDATOR X BEAST. I REMEMBER IT.
I FOUND THE TANK WITH MY NAME ON IT, WITH A BODY JUST LIKE MY OWN.
I VOWED, "THIS TIME I WILL SURVIVE." I VOWED I WOULD KILL YOU.
LET ME GIVE YOU SOME ADVICE--
--IN YOUR NEXT LIFE, DON'T TALK SO MUCH!
SLASH
AAAH!

I GUESS WE KNOW WHAT WE HAVE TO DO. I'LL GET YOU CLOSE, YOU GET THE SHARD.
GOOD LUCK!
WELL, I EITHER MAKE THIS JUMP OR I END UP AS GIANT PUPPY CHOW SO--
YIPPEE KI YAY!
AND ANT-MAN HAS THE FRAGMENT. THE CROWD GOES--
THUMP

NOOO!
I HAVE IT!
DIE, YOU FOOL!
YAAARRRG!
I'VE GOT IT!
NOT THIS TIME! BOBBI, HEADED YOUR--
WE NEED THAT! YOU CAN'T HAVE IT!

NOW I HAVE THE FRAGMENT, AND I SHALL--
NOOOOO!
SO HELP ME, IF IT BURNS THIS BODY OUT, DYING TO STOP YOU WOULD BE THE MOST WONDERFUL NIGHTMARE!
AHHHH! STOP IT! YOU'RE TWISTING ME INSIDE OUT!
HAVE ALL THE POWER YOU LIKE, YOU'LL NEVER SEE ANOTHER THING IF I CAN HELP IT, MONSTER.
I'VE BEEN DYING TO DO THIS SINCE I MET YOU.
JUST CALL ME KT!
BECAUSE I JUST MADE YOU EXTINCT!
"YOU NERD! YOU DIDN'T REALLY SAY THAT!"
"I DID AND I'M NOT ASHAMED."
"AND SO THEY LET YOU GUYS HAVE IT?"

NOT EXACTLY. WHEN WHITEOUT TURNED ON SAURON, PIETRO GOT HIS SIGHT BACK.
I WAS FIVE MILES AWAY BEFORE THEY REALIZED I HAD THE FRAGMENT.
AND ONCE THEY KNEW IT WAS GONE, THEY WERE MORE AMICABLE. THEY LET ME PERSONALLY LOCK SAURON IN THE DEEPEST DARKEST DUNGEON.
SO, WHAT'S NEXT? DO WE KEEP LOOKING FOR SHARDS?
NO CHANCE. I DON'T KNOW A LOT ABOUT DEMIGOD PHYSIOLOGY, BUT HERCULES HAS THIRD-DEGREE BURNS AND HAS BEEN INSIDE A DINOSAUR. HE NEEDS TO SEE A DOCTOR.
SCOTT HAS A DINOSAUR BITE. I'M REALLY HOPING I DON'T HAVE RABIES. PIETRO--
--I THINK HE JUST LIKES TO TAKE HIS SHIRT OFF.
I WILL HAVE YOU KNOW I HAVE SEVERAL CRACKED RIBS THANKS TO HYPNOTIZED HERCULES.
HANG IN THERE, HERC. IN A MONTH, YOU'LL BE A WEREWOLF AND I'LL BE A WERE-DINOSAUR. WE CAN HAVE WACKY WERE-BUDDY ADVENTURES.
I'D WATCH THAT TV SHOW.
YOU STILL WITH US, HERC?
AYE, GOOD SAMUEL. HAVE I TOLD YOU OF THE TIME I FOUGHT THE ACTUAL HYDRA? EIGHT HEADS...zz
AND, HE'S OUT.
YEAH, I'M CALLING IT. WE LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY.
TAKE US HOME, TONY.
EXCELLENT COMMAND DECISION. I'M BEGINNING TO SEE WHY YOU'RE LEADER.
DON'T PUSH IT, MORSE.
THANK YOU, PIETRO. I LOVE YOU, TOO.

SECRET EMPIRE™

UNITED

#1

ZUB
ANINDITO
TARTAGLIA

MARVEL

THE SOVEREIGN REPUBLIC OF NEW TIAN.
THE NEW MUTANT STATE.
TIAN
KING XORN AND HIS ADVISORS HAVE BUILT A COUNTRY WHERE MUTANT AND HUMAN LIVE PEACEFULLY-- SIDE BY SIDE AND ARM IN ARM...
...LOOKING TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE!
UGGH--!
WHUMP

MUTANTS ARE IN *CHARGE* NOW, HUMIE!
GET *USED* TO IT!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
OH, THANK *GOD!*
OFFICER, HE...HE'S TRYING TO *KILL* ME!
THIS GUY *STARTED* IT! I WAS MINDIN' MY OWN BUSINESS WHEN HE CALLED ME A *"GENE JOKE"* AND TRIED TA *RUN ME DOWN.*
TH-THAT'S A *LIE!* WHY WOULD I *DO* THAT?!
I NEVER *TOUCHED* HIM!
DID YOU FEEL YOUR LIFE WAS IN *DANGER?*
YEAH, ABSOLUTELY.
THREATENING A MUTANT WITH VIOLENCE IS A *CLASS THREE OFFENSE,* SO I'M PLACING YOU *UNDER ARREST.*
OWWW--! NO, *DON'T!*
IF YOU *RESIST,* I'LL RESPOND WITH *RESTRAINING FORCE...*
ANTIQUE STORE
OPEN
POLICE

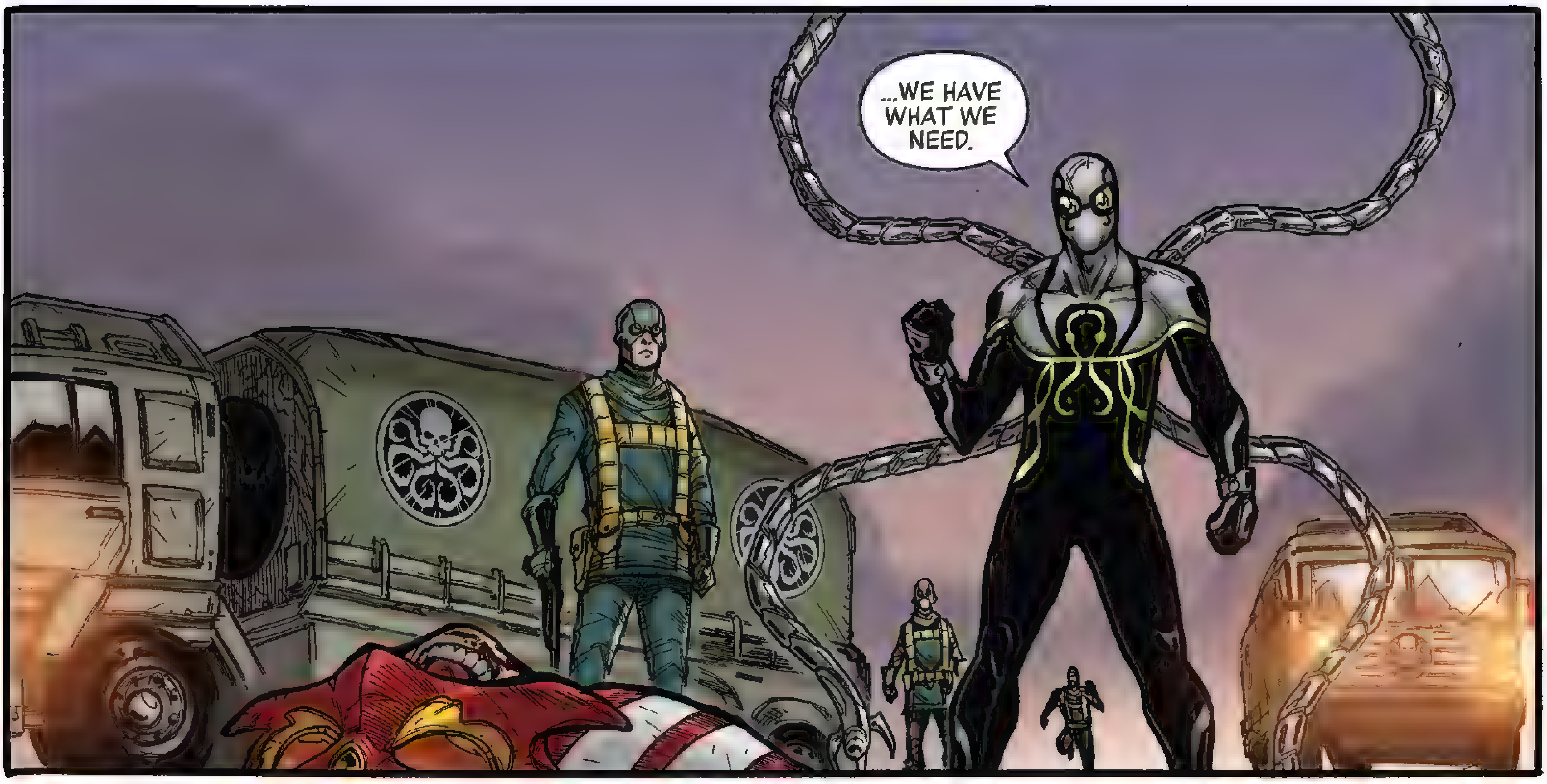
LULU
PISGOR ASOY!
STONEFRU
ZUB
DRIVE TO THE BORDER.
STAY INCONSPICUOUS.
YOU ARE ENTERING **HYDRA NATION** TERRITORY AND ARE BOUND BY THE TREATIES SIGNED BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES.
HYDRA N
ALL VISITORS MUST SUBMIT TO **MANDATORY INSPECTION** BEFORE BEING CLEARED TO CONTINUE.
HYD NAT
REFUSAL TO COMPLY MAY RESULT IN BEING TURNED BACK OR **DETENTION.**
DO NOT ENGAGE UNTIL YOU ARRIVE.
M-GENE ACTIVES ARE NOT ALLOWED IN HYDRA TERRITORY.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR VISIT?
BUSINESS.
DO YOU CARRY THE ***M-GENE*** OR HAVE IMMEDIATE FAMILY WITH ***MUTANT ABILITIES?***
NO.
HAVE YOUR IDENTIFICATION READY AND COMPLY WITH BORDER SECURITY TO EXPEDITE THE INSPECTION PROCESS.
SE
PISGOR ASOY!
STOP
WHAT TH--

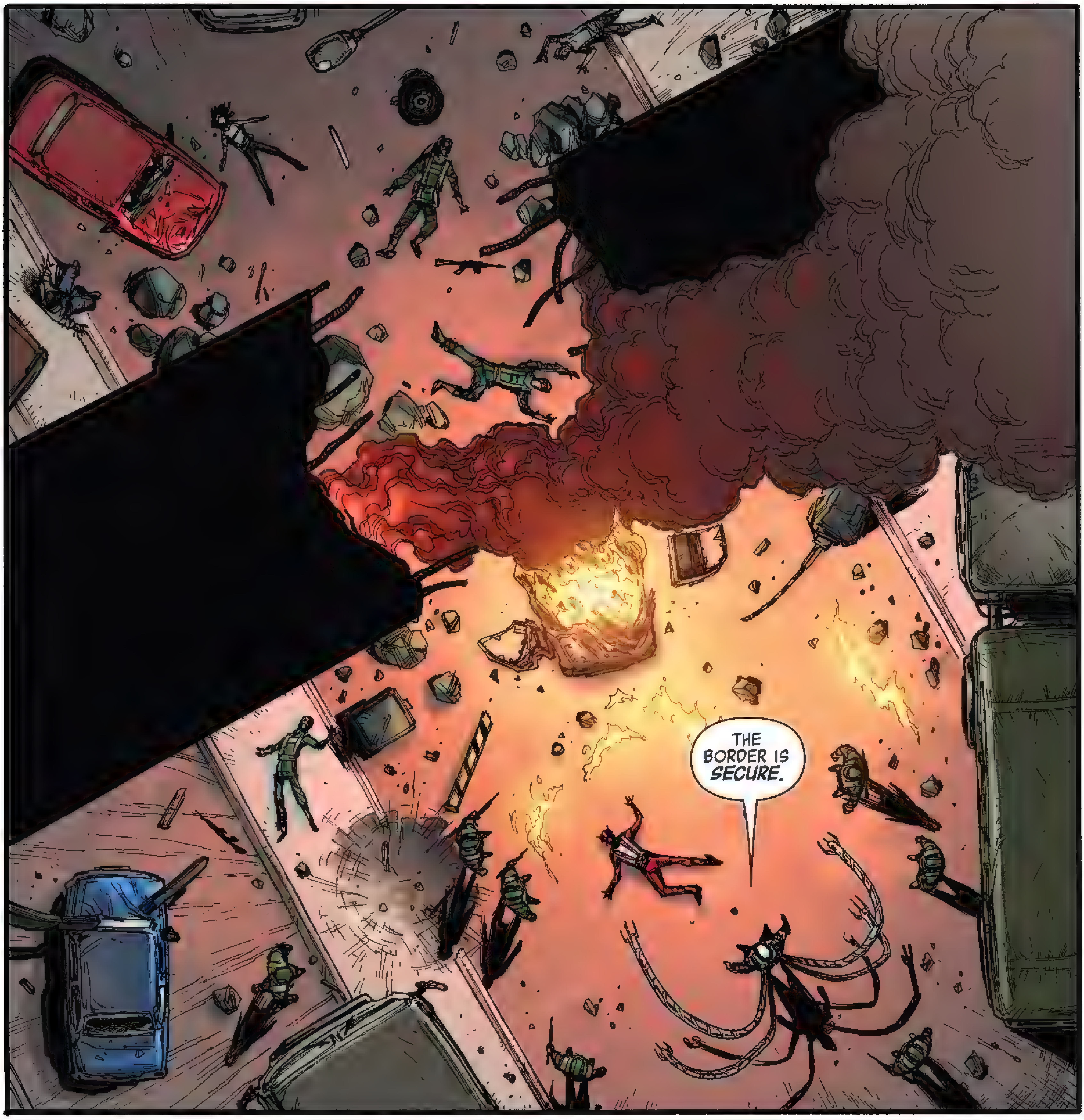
DEATH TO HYDRA!
MUTANTS FIGHT FOR FREEDOM!
SUNFIRE: MUTANT WITH THE ABILITY TO EMIT BURNING PLASMA AND FLY.
RANDOM: MUTANT WITH A MALLEABLE PROTOPLASM BODY THAT CAN SPAWN WEAPONS AND HEAL RAPIDLY.
FRENZY: MUTANT WITH SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH, SPEED AND DURABILITY.

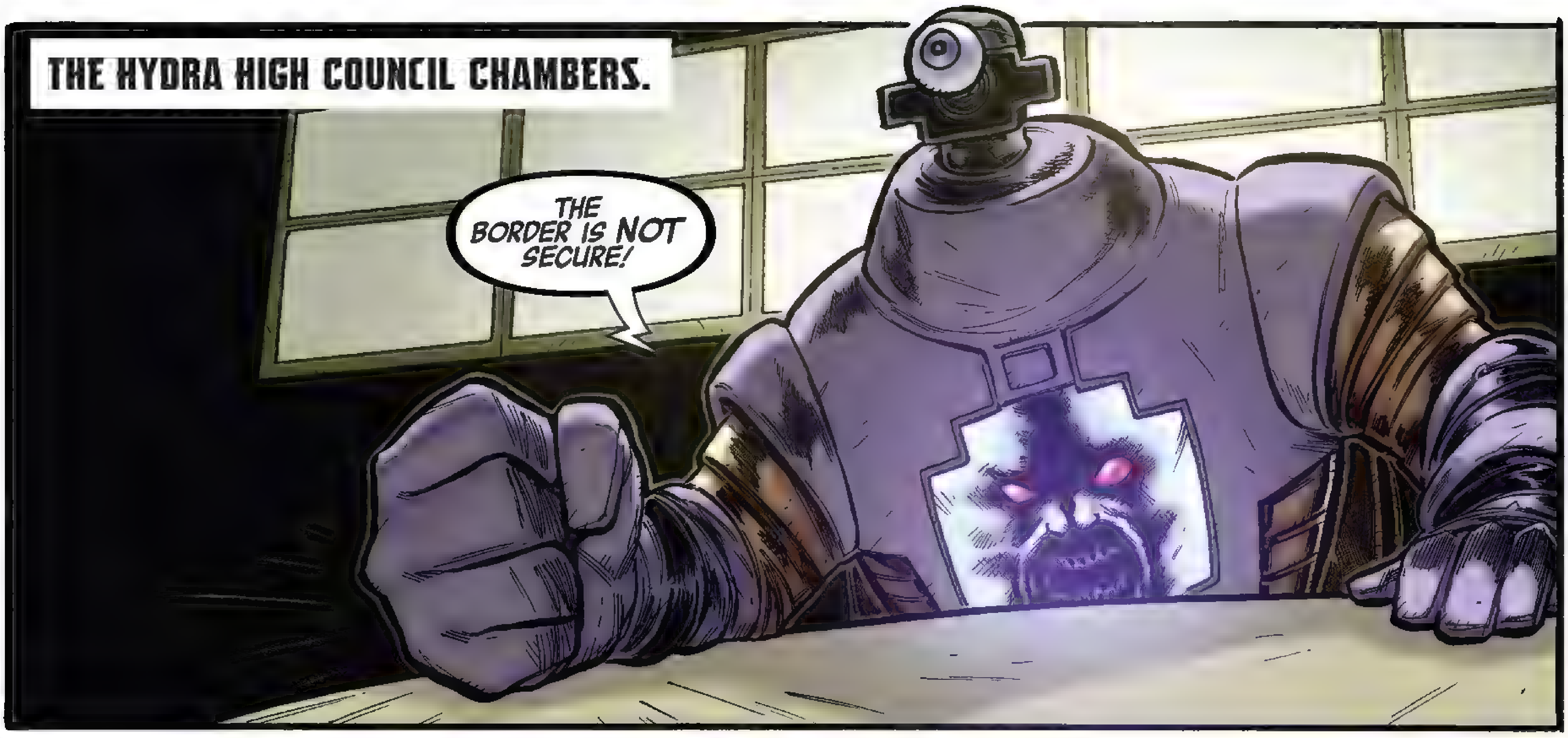
DOWN WITH THE FASCIST REGIME!
UHHH--!
SMASH
MUTANTS ARE THE FUTURE!
BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA
RATATATATAT
FSSSSH
WE WILL NOT SURRENDER!
WE WILL NOT BE SILENCED!

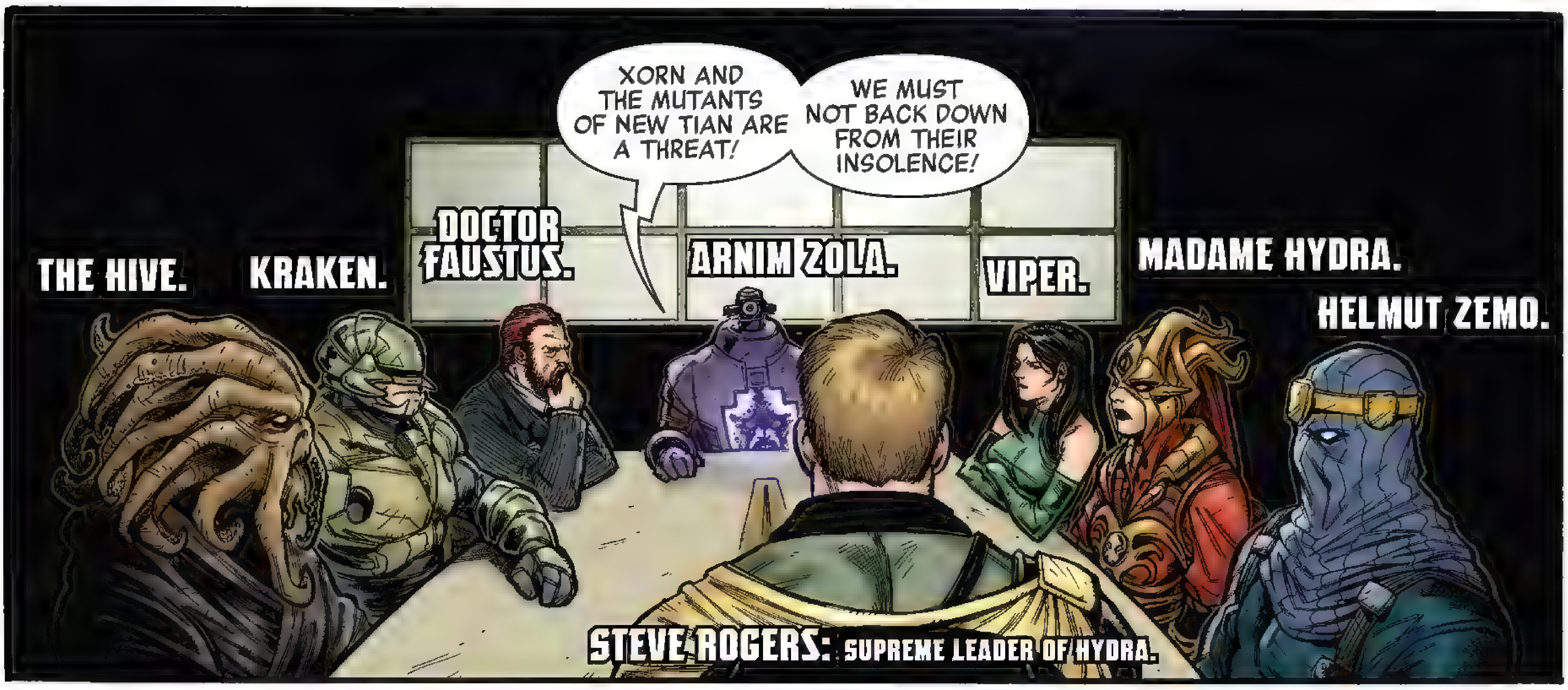
WE--
BAM
UNNGH!
WHAT YOU WILL DO IS STOP YOUR *INCESSANT CHANTING!*
NOW, *YIELD* OR BE BROUGHT DOWN IN A MOST *PAINFUL* MANNER.
SUPERIOR OCTOPUS: OTTO OCTAVIUS' MIND IN A GENETICALLY ENHANCED HYBRID BODY, WITH NEWLY ENHANCED MECHANICAL TENTACLES AT HIS COMMAND.
TANG
WE WILL NOT SURRENDER!
TANG
SUIT YOURSELVES, YOU FOOLS.
TANG
I'M *HAPPY* TO TEST THE *STRENGTH* OF MY NEW *TENTACLE ARRAY* AGAINST YOUR *STUPIDITY*...
WHUMP
--UK!
...AND SHOW YOU WHY I AM THE *SUPERIOR OCTOPUS!*
OOOOF!
THOOM

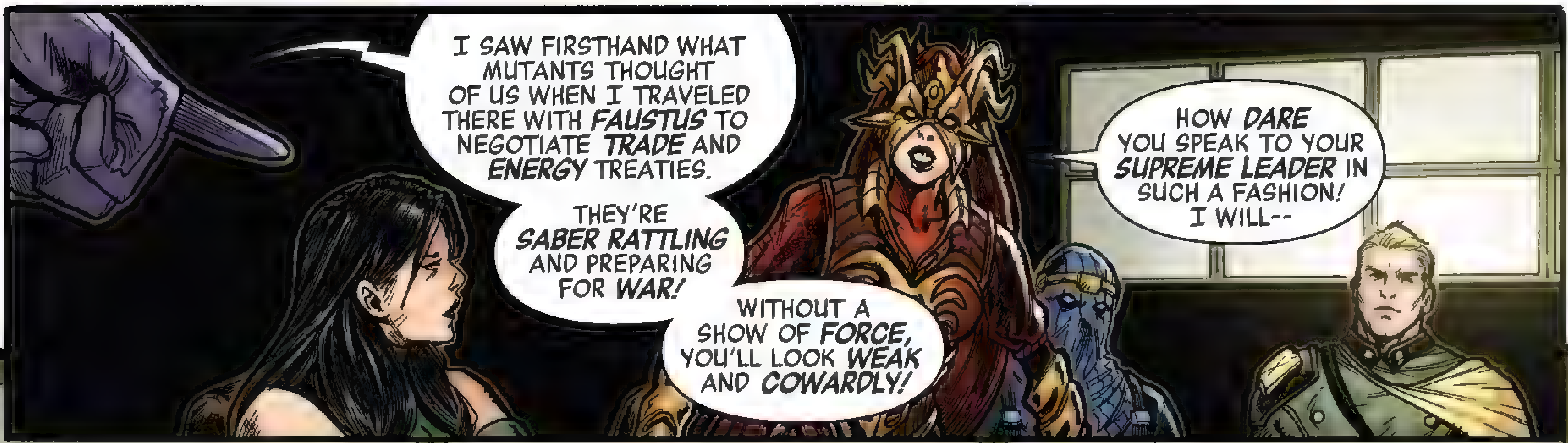
DEATH TO HYDRA!
MY GENIUS IS WASTED SLUGGING IT OUT WITH Z-LISTERS AND CRACKPOTS...
GIVE A ME A REAL CHALLENGE!
BAM
BAM
UNNN--!
DO NOT LET YOURSELF BE CAPTURED.
UHHHHHH--
RAAAAAH--!
SIR, SHOULD WE PURSUE?
NO.
LET HER FLEE BACK INTO THE ARMS OF HER MUTANT BRETHREN...

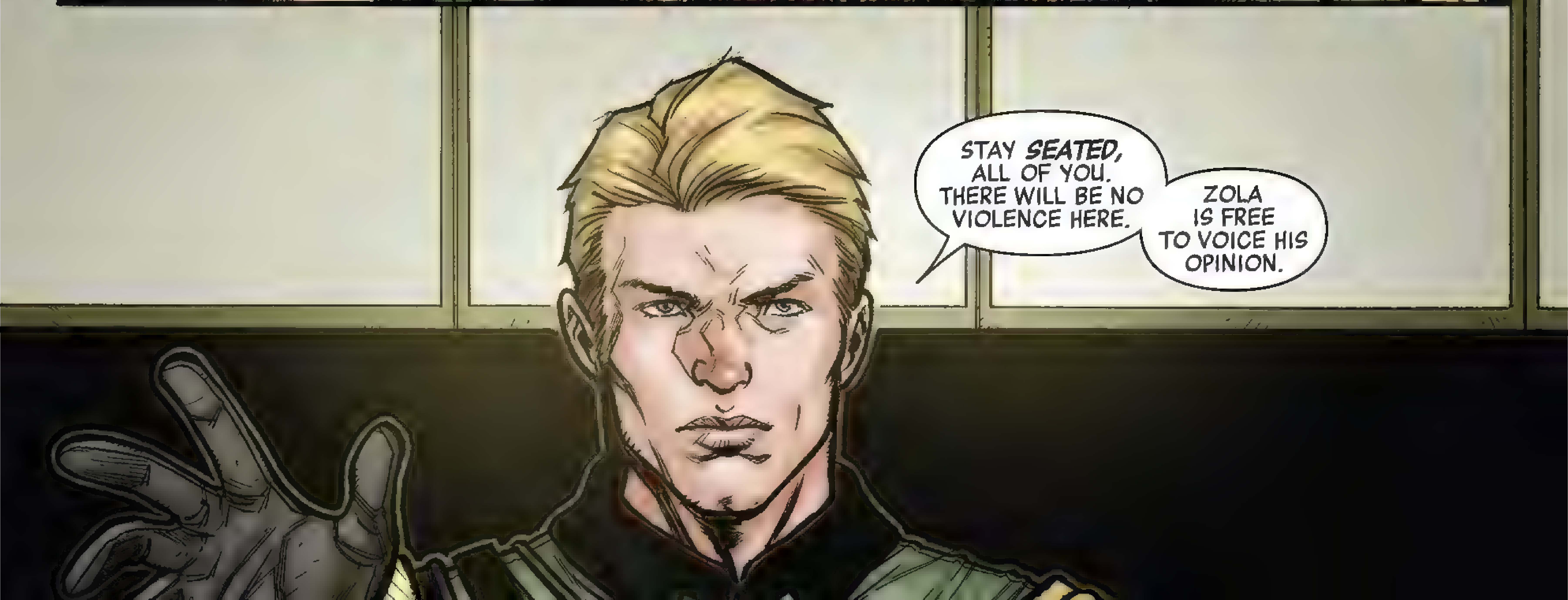

...WE HAVE WHAT WE NEED.


THE BORDER IS *SECURE.*


THE HYDRA HIGH COUNCIL CHAMBERS.
THE BORDER IS NOT SECURE!


XORN AND THE MUTANTS OF NEW TIAN ARE A THREAT!
WE MUST NOT BACK DOWN FROM THEIR INSOLENCE!
THE HIVE.
KRAKEN.
DOCTOR FAUSTUS.
ARNIM ZOLA.
VIPER.
MADAME HYDRA.
HELMUT ZEMO.
STEVE ROGERS: SUPREME LEADER OF HYDRA.


I SAW FIRSTHAND WHAT MUTANTS THOUGHT OF US WHEN I TRAVELED THERE WITH FAUSTUS TO NEGOTIATE TRADE AND ENERGY TREATIES.
THEY'RE SABER RATTLING AND PREPARING FOR WAR!
WITHOUT A SHOW OF FORCE, YOU'LL LOOK WEAK AND COWARDLY!
HOW DARE YOU SPEAK TO YOUR SUPREME LEADER IN SUCH A FASHION! I WILL--


STAY SEATED, ALL OF YOU. THERE WILL BE NO VIOLENCE HERE.
ZOLA IS FREE TO VOICE HIS OPINION.

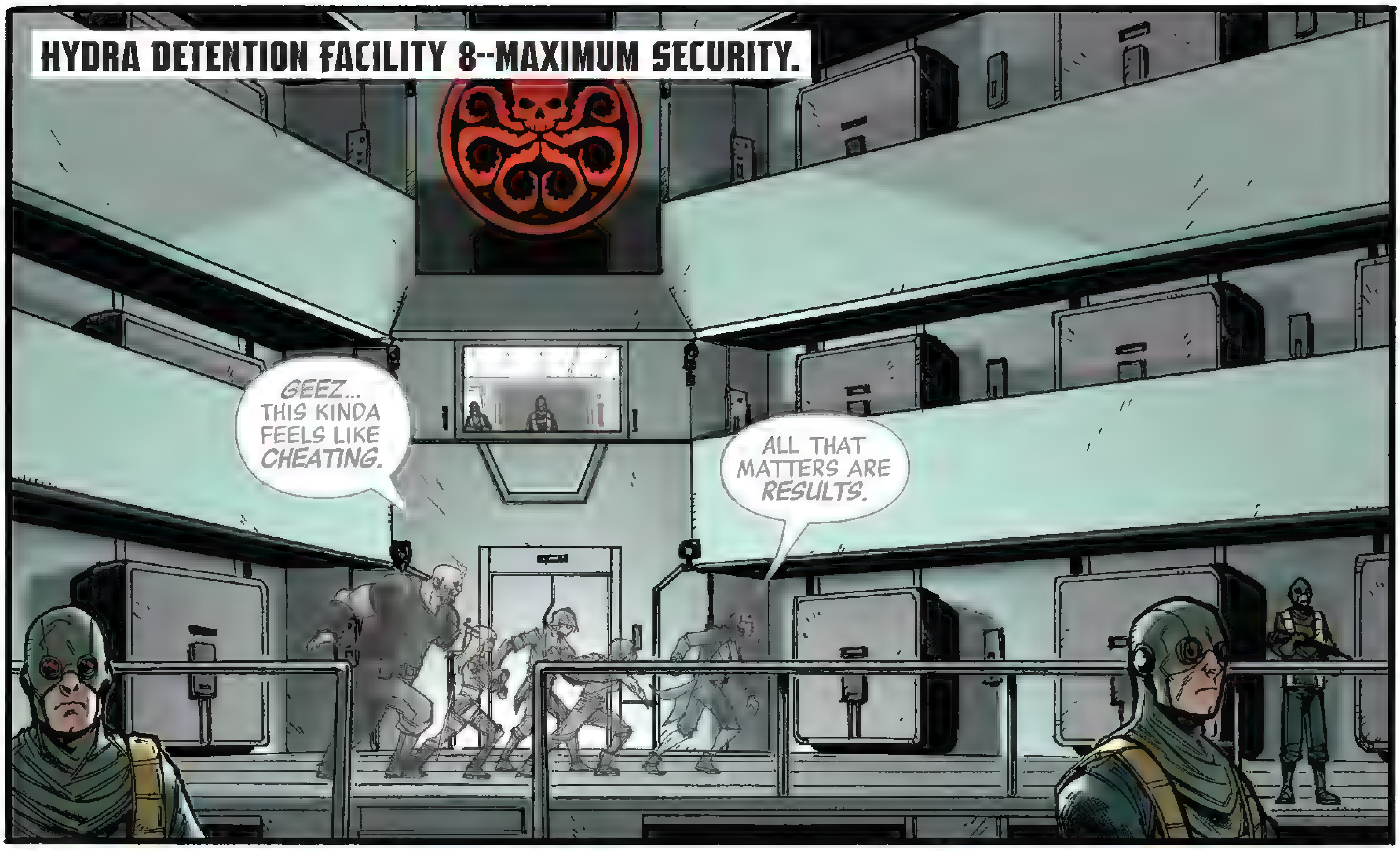
ZOLA'S TONE IS MELODRAMATIC, BUT HE SEEMS TO BE CORRECT, STEVEN.
THE MUTANT PRISONER WE CAPTURED HAS ALREADY MADE A STATEMENT TO THE PRESS, AND IT'S DAMNING TO SAY THE LEAST.
ROLL 212...
HNN
--ASKED ABOUT HIS ROLE IN THE ATTACK, MR. YOSHIDA, ALSO KNOWN AS "SUNFIRE," WAS QUITE DIRECT...
THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.
WE WILL NOT STAY IN A FORCED RESERVATION.
HNN
MUTANTS WILL DESTROY THE HYDRA NATION!
WHEN WE ARE VICTORIOUS, HUMAN BODIES WILL LITTER THE STREETS AND YOUR BLOOD WI--
STOP PLAYBACK. WE GET THE POINT.
HAS THERE BEEN ANY FORMAL RESPONSE FROM XORN OR HIS REPRESENTATIVES?
THEY CLAIM NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ATTACK, BUT BUT THEY'RE ALSO NOT CONDEMNING IT...
IT'S EITHER AN INSURGENT GROUP WITHIN NEW TIAN OR IT'S A SANCTIONED STRIKE MEANT TO TEST OUR RESOLVE BEFORE LAUNCHING A FULL-SCALE ASSAULT.
REGARDLESS OF THE SOURCE, WE MUST RESPOND.

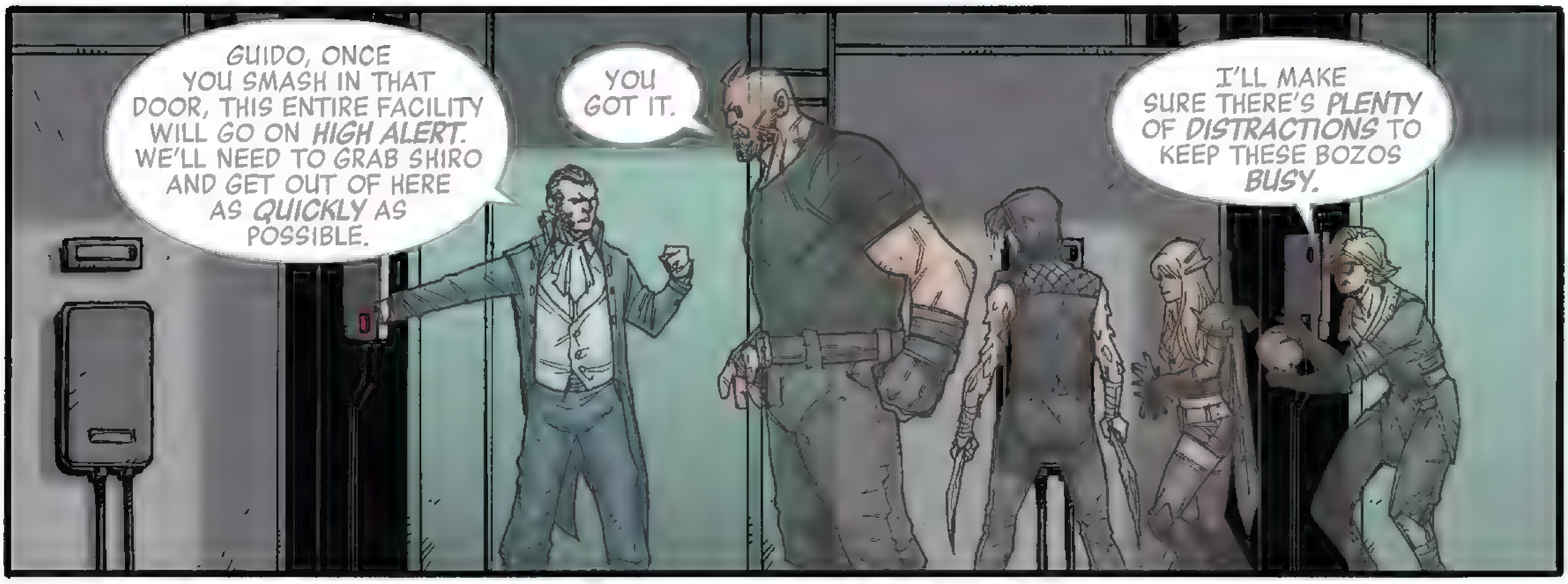
WE WILL NOT RETALIATE WITH FORCE.
NOT YET.
HELMUT, BEEF UP BORDER SECURITY AND DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF DREADNOUGHT PATROLS THROUGHOUT THE REGION.
AS YOU COMMAND.
SUNFIRE'S TRIAL WILL PLAY OUT IN THE PUBLIC EYE.
THE FOOTAGE OF HIS ATTACK WILL BE MORE THAN ENOUGH TO PUT HIM AWAY FOR LIFE AND BRAND THE MUTANT MOVEMENT AS TERRORISTS.
STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN SECURITY AND BENEVOLENCE IS KEY.
PREPOSTEROUS!
YOU EXPOSE OUR BELLY TO THE ENEMY! WHAT KIND OF INSANE--
WATCH YOUR TONE, ZOLA...
WE ALREADY FOUGHT ONE WAR TO GET WHERE WE ARE AND IT COST ALL OF US A GREAT DEAL OF PAIN AND SUFFERING.
I WON'T SEE THE PEACE WE WORKED SO HARD TO ACHIEVE CRUMBLE OVER SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
LET'S HOPE NEW TIAN FEELS THE SAME...

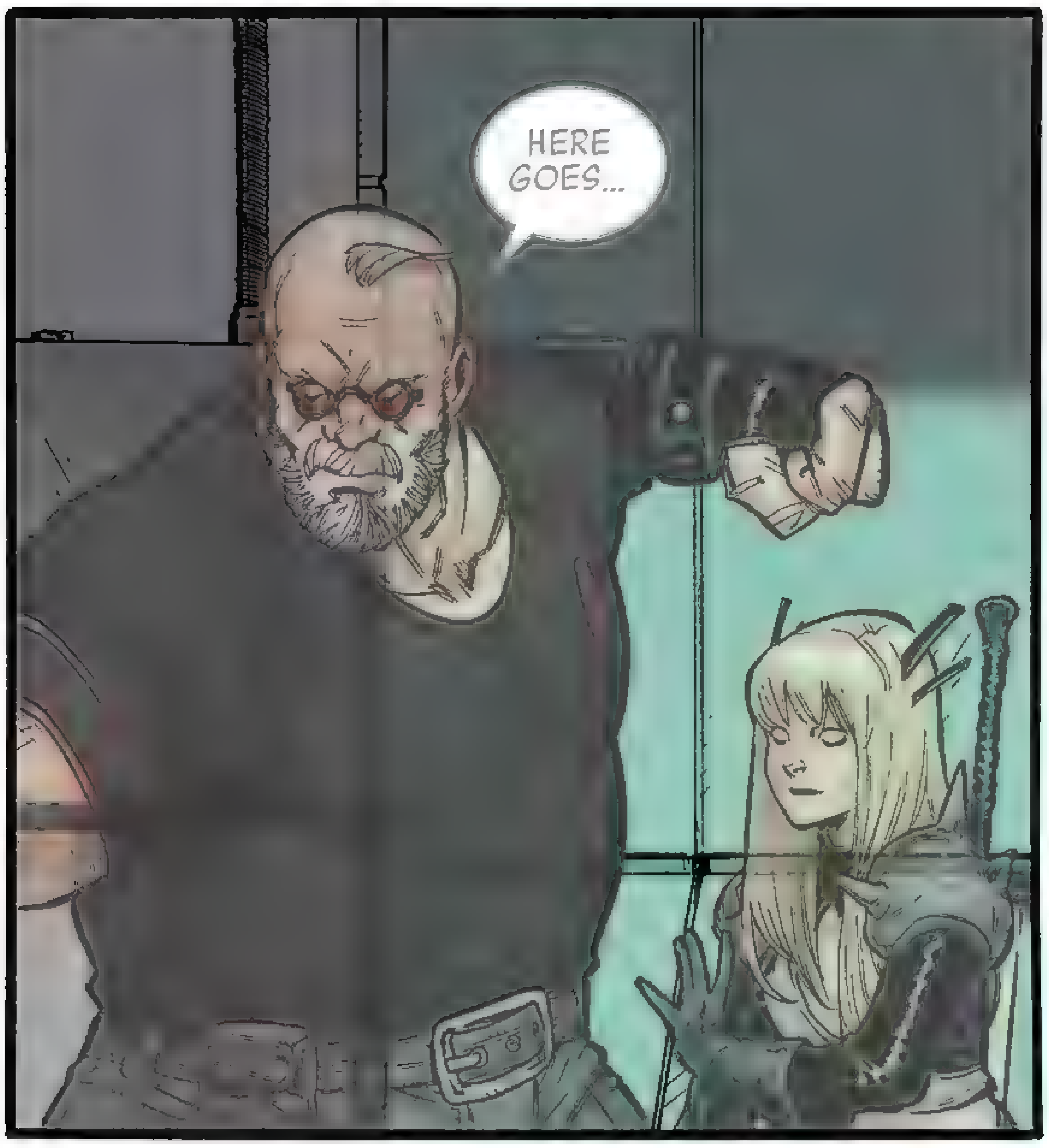
XORN'S THRONE ROOM.
NEW TIAN.
WH
SHIRO YOSHIDA
MR. YOSHIDA'S TRIAL DATE IS BEING FAST-TRACKED TO ENSURE JUSTICE PREVAILS THROUGHOUT THE HYDRA NATION.
A FASCINATING TURN OF EVENTS...
YOU SAY "FASCINATING," I SAY "HORRIFYING."
THEY'RE USING IT AS A PR STUNT WHILE WE TAKE THE BLAME.
ARCHANGEL.
SEBASTIAN SHAW.
XORN: KING OF NEW TIAN.
BEAST.
THERE'S BEEN A SUDDEN SPIKE IN VIOLENCE ON THE STREETS OF NEW TIAN.
TENSION IS RISING AT AN ALARMING RATE AMONG HUMANS AND MUTANTS IN A WAY I CAN'T ACCOUNT FOR...
OF COURSE PEOPLE ARE ANGRY! WE'RE NEIGHBORS WITH A COUNTRY RUN BY A SUPER-SOLDIER TYRANT!
IF HYDRA WANTS TO MAKE US THE ENEMY, I SAY WE OBLIGE THEM...
...RIP THEIR FASCIST HEARTS OUT.
SHIRO HAS A SHORT FUSE, BUT THIS ATTACK DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.
WHY WOULD HE THROW HIS LIFE AWAY FOR SUCH A PETTY SYMBOLIC GESTURE?
WHOM DOES IT BENEFIT?
WE SHOULD ASK HIS ACCOMPLICES. HAS THERE BEEN ANY SIGN OF FRENZY OR RANDOM?
NOTHING.

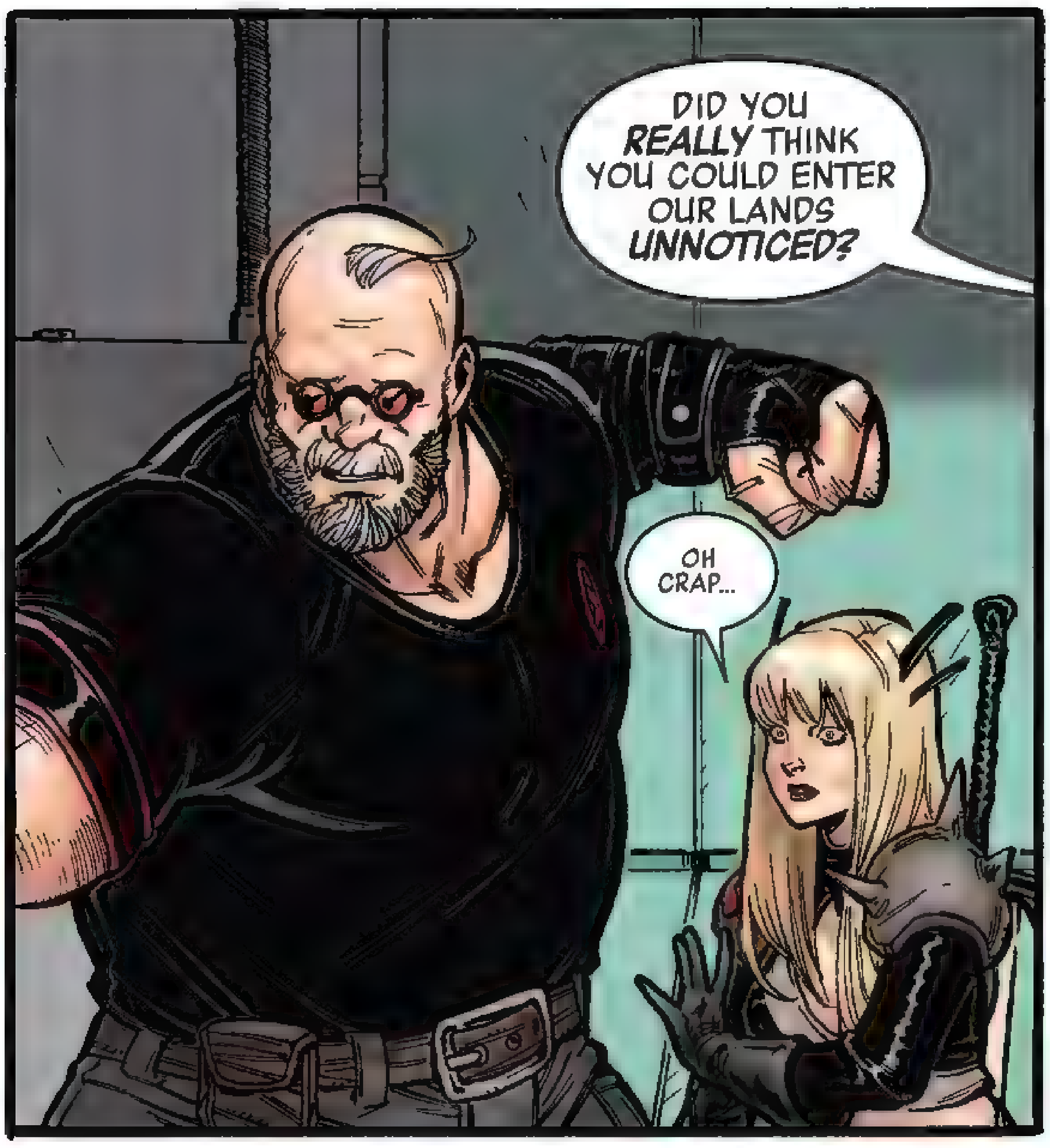
IF SHIRO SPOUTS OFF MORE "DOWN WITH HYDRA" RHETORIC ON THE STAND, IT'LL GET UGLY.
I COULD ATTEMPT TO NEGOTIATE HIS RELEASE SO WE COULD TRY HIM HERE FOR HIS CRIMES, BUT THEN WE LOOK CULPABLE.
I HATE ALL OF THIS. I JUST WANT TO KEEP PEOPLE SAFE ANY WAY I CAN.
WHETHER SHIRO DID THIS OF HIS OWN ACCORD OR WAS MANIPULATED INTO IT, WE CANNOT LET HYDRA CONTROL THE NARRATIVE.
WE MUST SEND IN A TEAM TO BRING HIM BACK.
THE SLEEPERS AND I CAN PIERCE THEIR DEFENSES AND--
NO.
YOU ARE TOO VISIBLY ASSOCIATED WITH NEW TIAN'S LEADERSHIP. THE RISK OUTWEIGHS THE REWARD.
SHAW.
MY LIEGE?
ASSEMBLE A TEAM OF CAPABLE-BUT-EXPENDABLE MUTANTS FOR THIS MISSION.
YOU WILL STRIKE TONIGHT.
BRING SUNFIRE TO ME SO I CAN DETERMINE WHO PUT HIM UP TO THIS, OR KILL HIM MYSELF...

"STEALTH" IS OUR WATCHWORD, MY FRIENDS.
WE MUST PROCURE SUNFIRE FROM THE HOLDING FACILITY WHERE HE'S BEING KEPT AND ESCAPE WITHOUT BEING SEEN.
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME, BUT HOW'RE WE S'POSED TO BE SNEAKY WITH BIG GUY HERE WALKIN' AROUND?
STRONG GUY: MUTANT WITH SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH AND DURABILITY, AS WELL AS KINETIC ENERGY ABSORPTION ABILITIES.
THE NAME'S "STRONG GUY."
"BIG GUY" IS MY SECOND COUSIN.
MAGIK: MUTANT SORCERESS AND WIELDER OF THE SOULSWORD.
BOOM-BOOM: MUTANT WITH THE ABILITY TO GENERATE PLASMA TIME BOMBS THAT EXPLODE WITH CONCUSSIVE FORCE.
MARROW: MUTANT WITH THE ABILITY TO GROW BONE WEAPONRY AND HEAL WOUNDS AT AN EXTRAORDINARY RATE.
THAT IS PRECISELY WHY ILLYANA WILL BE ACCOMPANYING US...
THE FORCE FIELD HYDRA PUT AROUND EARTH HAS BLOCKED MY ABILITY TO TELEPORT US TO OUR TARGET, BUT I'VE GOT OTHER USEFUL SPELLS AT MY DISPOSAL.
ALIGNMENT CORRECTED, AND PRESENCE PROTECTED, WITH THESE ANCIENT WARDS, MY FRIENDS UNDETECTED.
WELL, THAT'S CREEPY.
STAY CLOSE TO ME AND WE'LL BE JUST FINE...


HYDRA DETENTION FACILITY 8--MAXIMUM SECURITY.
GEEZ... THIS KINDA FEELS LIKE CHEATING.
ALL THAT MATTERS ARE RESULTS.


GUIDO, ONCE YOU SMASH IN THAT DOOR, THIS ENTIRE FACILITY WILL GO ON HIGH ALERT. WE'LL NEED TO GRAB SHIRO AND GET OUT OF HERE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.
YOU GOT IT.
I'LL MAKE SURE THERE'S PLENTY OF DISTRACTIONS TO KEEP THESE BOZOS BUSY.


HERE GOES...


DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU COULD ENTER OUR LANDS UNNOTICED?
OH CRAP...

I SENSED YOUR *PRESENCE* THE *INSTANT* YOU CROSSED THE *BORDER,* LITTLE DEMON...
SCARLET WITCH: CURRENTLY POSSESSED BY THE SPIRIT OF CHTHON, ELDER GOD OF EVIL.
VISION: POWERFUL SYNTHEZOID WITH CONTROL OF HIS MOLECULAR DENSITY. UNDER HYDRA CONTROL.
DEADPOOL: MERC WITH A MOUTH FOLLOWING THE ORDERS OF STEVE ROGERS.
TASKMASTER: WEAPONS MASTER WITH PHOTOGRAPHIC REFLEXES. WORKS FOR THE HIGHEST BIDDER.
GUIDO, GET *SUNFIRE! WE'LL* TAKE CARE OF THIS!
OKIE-DOKIE--!
RIIIIP
IS THIS GONNA BE LIKE ONE OF THOSE *HOT PRISON RIOT MOVIES?!*
I FLIPPIN' *LOVE* THOSE!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT REN FAIRE YOU ESCAPED FROM, BUT YOU'RE GOIN' DOWN, MR. DARCY!
KRAK
NNNG--!
I SHALL ENJOY DESTROYING YOU AND TAKING YOUR SOUL WEAPON...
GET STUFFED, YOU OLD HAG!
TICK TICK--
BOOM BOOM
HEY, NO FAIR!
YOU ARE TRESPASSING ON HYDRA TERRITORY. SUBMIT TO AUTHORITY OR BE RENDERED INERT.
MARROW?!
THEY MUST'VE BEEN PRETTY HARD UP TO GET YOU ON THIS MISSION...
...BONE BLADES ARE SOOOO LATE 20TH CENTURY, AMIRIGHT?
K-TANG
SHUT UP!
K-TANG

SWORD AND SHIELD DO NOT A WARRIOR MAKE.
WHAM
UHH!
DO NOT LET THEM *ISOLATE* US!
SWITCH OPPONENTS!
WEAK!
WHUMP
THOK
G'YAAH!
ATTACKING WITH PHYSICAL WEAPONRY IS A POINTLESS ENDEAVOR.
BY ALTERING MY MOLECULAR STRUCTURE, I CAN--

MY SOULSWORD IS MORE POWERFUL THAN YOUR MOLECULAR HOO-HA!
01101001 01101101 01110000 01101111 01110011 01110011 01101001 01100010 01101100 01100101
SHUNK
WHOA, LADY!
PANTS PULLING IS AGAINST THE SUPER HERO CODE OF CONDUCT AND--
TICK TICK--
--UNCOOL--!
BOOM
YOU FOOLS WILL BE PUNISHED FOR HARMING MY PHYSICAL VESSEL!

MAYBE, BUT NOT TODAY.
AAHHHHH--!
FOOOOOM
THAT SUCKER PUNCH WAS PRETTY GOOD, PAL, BUT NOW I'M READY FOR...
...FOR...
41210
...AH, FORGET IT.
GET OUTTA HERE.
I'M NOT BEIN' PAID ENOUGH FOR THIS #@$%.

THE NEXT MORNING.
RUN THIS BY ME AGAIN...
...FIVE C-GRADE MUTANTS BROKE INTO OUR HIGH-SECURITY FACILITY, HANDILY DEFEATED THE AVENGERS AND SPRUNG SUNFIRE?
THAT'S CORRECT.
SCARLET WITCH IS CURRENTLY HEALING THROUGH MYSTICAL MEANS. SHE'S MORE ANGRY THAN INJURED AT THIS POINT.
VISION IS UNDERGOING REPAIRS AS WE SPEAK.
DEADPOOL AND TASKMASTER HAVE RETURNED TO ACTIVE DUTY.
THIS CANNOT BE IGNORED, ROGERS!
WE MUST RETALIATE AND PUT THESE FOUL MUTANTS IN THEIR PLACE!
I AGREE, ZOLA...
FINALLY!
...WHICH IS WHY I'M GOING TO CONTACT HANK McCOY AND MEET WITH XORN IN PERSON.

HYDRA NATION
H4012A
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE SPOILING FOR A *SCRAP*, CAP.
ASTUTE AS ALWAYS, HANK.
HOW DID IT GET TO THIS?
SIMPLE.
YOU PICKED THE *WRONG SIDE.*
YOU...YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT...
STEVE...
...IT'S *HYDRA.*
IT'S THE *BETTER WORLD* WE'VE BEEN FIGHTING FOR.

KING XORN.
YES?
I PRESENT TO YOU STEVE ROGERS...
...SUPREME LEADER OF THE HYDRA NATION.
HE...
HE INSISTED ON MEETING YOU ALONE.
HOW BOLD.

YOU MAY LEAVE, MR. McCOY.
AS YOU WISH...
YOU CAN COME OUT NOW...

WALKING RIGHT INTO THE HEART OF MY KINGDOM BY YOURSELF...
...YOU'RE REALLY PUSHING YOUR LUCK, MR. SUPREME LEADER.
...EMMA.
--
EMMA FROST: MUTANT ANARCHIST PSYCHIC WANTED FOR CRIMES AGAINST MUTANTS AND INHUMANS.
WHEN YOU SAID YOU COULD SECRETLY CONTROL XORN AND KEEP THE MUTANT POPULATION IN LINE, I WONDERED IF YOU'D BITTEN OFF MORE THAN YOU COULD CHEW.
NOW YOU THINK YOU CAN ATTACK US AND GET AWAY WITH IT?
NOT AT ALL.
I DID SEND A STRIKE TEAM TO RETRIEVE SUNFIRE, BUT THAT WAS ONLY TO CONFIRM MY SUSPICIONS ABOUT THE CAUSE OF THIS CLASH BETWEEN OUR SOVEREIGN NATIONS.
LOOK WHAT I FOUND BURIED DEEP WITHIN SHIRO'S MIND...
DRIVE TO THE BORDER. STAY INCONSPICUOUS.
DO NOT ENGAGE UNTIL YOU ARRIVE.
ONCE YOU HAVE MET THE TARGET, YOU WILL ATTACK WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT AND CRY FORTH--
DEATH TO HYDRA! MUTANTS FIGHT FOR FREEDOM!
DOWN WITH THE FASCIST REGIME!

YOU'VE GOT *WOLVES* IN YOUR *HENHOUSE*, STEVE.
TWO OF YOUR OWN, STOKING THE FIRE UNDER THE GUISE OF *DIPLOMACY*, TRYING TO PUSH US INTO WAR.
I SUGGEST YOU TAKE *CARE* OF THEM...
IT WILL BE *DEALT* WITH.
GOOD.
THEN I LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUED *TRADE* AND *PROSPERITY* BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES.
AS DO I.
KLAK
ALWAYS SO *SMUG*, *CAPTAIN HYDRA.*
FORCING MUTANTS INTO A MAKESHIFT "KINGDOM"...TRYING TO BAR US FROM OUR INHERITANCE.
YOU THINK IT'S ALL UNDER *CONTROL.*
JUST YOU *WAIT...*
...I'M *FULL* OF SURPRISES.

...CONFRONTING IT HEAD-ON, OUR FEARLESS LEADER HAS TURNED THE TIDE IN TENSE RELATIONS WITH **NEW TIAN.**
HNN
IN ADDITION TO **DE-ESCALATING VIOLENCE** BETWEEN OUR NATIONS, HE ALSO BROKERED SEVERAL NEW **TRADE TREATIES** AND INSPECTED THE SITE OF A POSSIBLE **ENERGY PIPELINE.**
IN OUR LATEST VIEWER POLLS, THE SUPREME LEADER'S **POPULARITY** HAS SOARED TO A **NEW HIGH...**
SUPREME LEADER!
YOU **HONOR** US WITH YOUR PRESENCE.
HAIL HYDRA!
YOU MAY SIT.

STEVEN, IF I MAY...
OF COURSE, ZEMO. MY FRIEND. SPEAK FREELY.
WHILE ALL OF US ARE THRILLED TO SEE A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION TO RECENT EVENTS, I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL THAT YOU PUT YOURSELF IN UNNECESSARY DANGER.
IT WAS A RISK THAT PAID OFF, BUT A RISK NONETHELESS...
YOU ARE THE SUPREME LEADER. YOU EMBODY HYDRA'S IDEALS.
IF SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED TO YOU--
YES, IT WAS A RISK, BUT ONE I WAS WILLING TO TAKE IN ORDER TO ADVANCE OUR SHARED GOALS.
NO ONE PERSON CAN EMBODY ALL THAT HYDRA IS, NOT EVEN THE SUPREME LEADER.
ALL OF US MUST KNOW OUR PLACE AND SERVE...
...LOYALLY AND HUMBLY...

...OR BE DESTROYED, FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE NATION.
END.

UNCANNY AVENGERS®

MARVEL

#24

ZUB
JACINTO
BONVILLAIN

ONE MINUTE WE'RE KICKING BUTT AGAINST AN ARMY OF BAD GUYS,* NOW THIS...
...AVENGERS, WE'VE BEEN SET UP.
JERICHO, WHAT'RE WE LOOKIN' AT HERE?
IT'S CLEARLY UNNATURAL, ROGUE, BUT I'LL NEED TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK TO DETERMINE ITS ORIGIN.
I FEEL CONFUSION AND PAIN IN ALL DIRECTIONS!
PEOPLE ARE TERRIFIED!
CAN YOU BLAME 'EM?
*AS SHOWN IN SECRET EMPIRE #0.--TOM

NEW YORK CITY,
EIGHT MINUTES AFTER DARKNESS FELL.
IT'S *PITCH-BLACK* OUTSIDE IN THE *MIDDLE OF THE DAY!*

The UNCANNY AVENGERS in...

THE NIGHT SHIFT

PART ONE

WRITER: JIM ZUB
ARTIST: KIM JACINTO
COLOR ARTIST: TAMRA BONVILLAIN
LETTERER: VC'S CLAYTON COWLES
COVER: R.B. SILVA & JESUS ABURTOV
ASSISTANT EDITOR: ALANNA SMITH
EDITOR: TOM BREVOORT
EDITOR IN CHIEF: AXEL ALONSO
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER: JOE QUESADA
PRESIDENT: DAN BUCKLEY
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: ALAN FINE
AVENGERS CREATED BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

POWER IS OUT BELOW US AND I'VE GOT NO CELL SIGNAL TO CALL PIETRO.
WE'RE COMPLETELY *CUT OFF* FROM THE OUTSIDE.
NOT FOR LONG, IF AH HAVE ANYTHIN' TA SAY ABOUT IT...
UHH!
WHOOM
ROGUE, ARE YOU *OKAY?!*
YEAH, AH'M FINE. ONLY THING WOUNDED IS MY *PRIDE...*
NOT *EVERY* PROBLEM GETS SOLVED WITH A *PUNCH...*
SPEAK FER YOURSELF, JANET. *PUNCHIN'S* DONE ME PRETTY GOOD OVER TH' YEARS...

I KNOW IT'S A *LONG SHOT*, BUT LET ME SEE IF *FIRE* HAS ANY EFFECT.
IT'S WORTH A TRY, JOHNNY.
WAIT, LET'S--
FWOOOOSH
VOOOP
THAT'S NOT GOOD.
CAN WE PLEASE *SLOW DOWN* AND FIGURE OUT WHAT'S GOING ON?
THERE IS *MYSTICAL ENERGY* EMANATING FROM THE DARKNESS, BUT THE *SOURCE* IS NOT IMMEDIATELY APPARENT.
THAT SAID, IT'S CLEARLY MEANT TO *KEEP US IN.*
WHERE DOES THIS POWER COME FROM?
A *MAN*... BUT I DO NOT *RECOGNIZE* HIM.
WAIT, THERE'S SOMETHING *ELSE*...

VI-ISH
SKREEEE
A CREATURE!
VOODOO!
IT JUST STEPPED OUT OF THE DARKNESS!
WELL, HE SHOULDA *STAYED* THERE IF HE KNEW WHAT WAS *GOOD* FOR HIM!
AHH!
VOOOSH

FOOM
DON'T WORRY, SYNAPSE. AH GOTCHA.
Please never do that again...
SHLORP
SHLORP
SHLORP
UH, GUYS...?
NOW I UNDERSTAND...THESE CREATURES ARE FROM THE *DARKFORCE DIMENSION.*
THE SKY ABOVE HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A *CONDUIT* BETWEEN *OUR* WORLD AND *THEIRS.*
THEN WE'RE ALL THAT STANDS BETWEEN THOSE *CRITTERS* AN' *INNOCENT FOLKS* BELOW.
LET'S GET TO IT, AVENGERS!

EMILY, REACH OUT WITH YOUR POWERS AN' SEARCH FOR ANY WOUNDED.
YOU GOT IT.
JERICHO, ANY IDEA IF WE CAN PUSH THESE UGLIES *BACK?*
I'LL CONSULT WITH THE *SPIRITS* AND--
KRAKOOM
YOU DO THAT, WHILE JANET, JOHNNY AN' ME TAKE CARE O' BUSINESS!
GOOD LUCK.
YOU, TOO.
PHANTOMS WITHIN THE DARKNESS, ANSWER MY CALL...
SHREEEEE

I'LL KEEP IT DISTRACTED!
ROGER THAT!
FSSSSSSSSH
AHHH, YES, THAT DISGUSTING BURNING MONSTER SMELL...
...LIKE WET DOG MIXED WITH HULK FARTS.
Ah!
Hey!
Quit shovin'!
AH CAN'T BELIEVE AH'M SAYIN' THIS...
...BUT AH MISS QUICKSILVER RIGHT NOW...

MANHATTAN,
OUTSIDE THE DOME.
FWOOOSSSH
I CAN'T LEAVE THE CITY FOR A *MINUTE* WITHOUT SOMETHING *RIDICULOUS* HAPPENING...
THIS TIME, SOME KIND OF *FORCE FIELD* COVERING THE ISLAND.
HMMMM...
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
NO GAPS IN THE SURFACE AT ALL...
ALL AVENGERS, REPEAT--ANY AND ALL AVENGERS THAT ARE LEFT--THIS IS TONY STARK--
EH?

IF YOU CAN HEAR THIS, YOUR SERVICES ARE REQUIRED IMMEDIATELY-- WE ARE UNDER ATTACK--
THIS IS THREAT LEVEL RED, DEFCON INFINITY STUFF HERE, PEOPLE--
--WE NEED YOU TO GET TO WASHINGTON, D.C.!
HMM...
FWOOOSSSH

NEW YORK CITY, TWELVE MINUTES AFTER DARKNESS FELL.
FOOM
FEAR EVERYWHERE, BUT I'VE GOT TO FOCUS...
THERE!
TWO TRAPPED INSIDE...
Okay, Emily. You can do this.
It's just a burning building...
I KNOW YOU'RE AFRAID, BUT STAY WHERE YOU ARE!
I'M COMING TO GET YOU!
THOOOM

COUGH COUGH
I NEED YOU TO STAY CALM AND FOLLOW ME...
OH.
Okay.
LOOKS LIKE OUR EXIT'S GONE UP IN SMOKE...
COUGH COUGH
FLOOM
ROGUE, IT'S SYNAPSE. I HOPE YOU CAN HEAR ME.
ZERO IN ON MY LOCATION...

HOLD ON TIGHT!
OKAY, I LIED. YOU CAN CATCH ME ANY TIME.
ROGUE, I'M WORRIED WE'RE SPREADING OURSELVES TOO THIN.
CAN'T BE HELPED, JANET. IN CASE YA HADN'T NOTICED, THE WHOLE CITY'S UNDER ATTACK!
Thank you, Ninja-Lady!
You're welcome.
I KNOW, BUT SCATTERING IN ALL DIRECTIONS ISN'T GOING TO SOLVE THIS.
NEITHER IS ARGUIN' ABOUT STRATEGY.
THAT'S THE PROBLEM. THERE IS NO STRATEGY!
IF YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR SOMEONE TA GIVE ORDERS, YOU'RE ON THE WRONG TEAM.
JUST SAVE LIVES AN' DON'T GET KILLED.
SEE HOW I ABSORBED THAT FIRE INTO MY BODY?
PRETTY SWEET, RIGHT?
You guys weren't even looking, were you?
sigh

WELL, THAT WAS MIGHTY MATURE, ANNA MARIE.
JANET CALLS YOU OUT AN' YOU JUST BOLT...
AH WAS HONEST WITH HER, THOUGH.
AH DON'T KNOW HOW TA TAKE CHARGE OR INSPIRE PEOPLE TA WORK TOGETHER.
AH'M NOT STEVE ROGERS...
...AN' AH NEVER WILL BE.
HOLD UP A SEC NOW...
...THAT HOLE WASN'T MADE BY CRITTERS!
SOMEBODY'S TAKIN' ADVANTAGE OF THIS MESS TA MAKE A WITHDRAWAL...
HURRY UP, HERMAN!
I'M GOIN', I'M GOIN'!

ZZZZOK
THE SHOCKER: HERMAN SCHULTZ. CRIMINAL OUTFITTED WITH "VIBRO-SMASHERS" USED TO SHAKE AND DESTROY ANYTHING THAT GETS IN HIS WAY.
NICE ONE!
NOW IT'S MY TURN!
SHRAAK
SCORPIA: ELAINE COLL. CRIMINAL IN A HIGH-TECH SCORPION BATTLE SUIT.
WHAT'D I TELL YA? THE FEDS STORE PART OF THE GOLD RESERVE HERE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL BANKS.
NO POWER, NO SECURITY, SO WE ARE LAUGHIN'!
HOLY MOLY!
HAHAHAHA!
A BAD-GUY CACKLE FULL OF IMPOTENT EVIL...
...SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT, RIGHT?
OH CRAP, IT'S THE X-MEN!

NOPE.
JUST LI'L OL' *ME.*
WHAM
DON'T FIGHT US, LADY!
THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T NEED ALL THIS *GOLD!* WE...WE COULD *SPLIT* IT!
AH'VE BEEN WHERE YOU'RE AT, SO AH'M *SYMPATHETIC...*
VAAAAM
...BUT AH STILL GOTTA DO MY JOB!
DON'T *TRY* TO *NEGOTIATE* WITH HER, ELAINE.
SHE'S GOT *"HERO BRAIN"*...THINKS SHE'S *BETTER* THAN US.
JUST KICK HER ASS!
ZZZKRAAAAAK

CRAAAASH
SPLAASH
WHAT THE &#@% DID YOU DO THAT FOR?!
SORRY! I WAS JUST TRYIN' TO *KNOCK HER DOWN!*
THESE NEW *VIBRO-SMASHERS* HAVE A *LOT* MORE *KICK* THAN MY *OLD* ONES!
WOULD BOTH OF YOU PLEASE *SHUT UP...*
RIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKK
...WE'VE GOT *BIGGER* FISH TA FRY.
KRIKKRIKKRIKKRIKKRIKKRIKKRIKKRIKKRI

FZAP
FZAP
WE NEED TO FIND *ROGUE!*
WE CAN'T WORRY ABOUT HER RIGHT NOW. OUR PRIORITY IS STOPPING THESE CREATURES ANY WAY WE CAN.
EMILY, ARE YOU *ALL RIGHT?*
SO MANY PEOPLE ARE *AFRAID*, JOHNNY...
...SO MUCH *DESPAIR*...
...HARD TO BLOCK IT OUT...
HOLD ON AS BEST YOU CAN, EMILY.
WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS *ROUGH PATCH* AND THEN--
JERICHO!
HAVE YOU HAD ANY *LUCK* WITH THE--
OH, NO!

DO NOT DISTURB US...
...WE ARE FEEDING!
TO BE CONTINUED!

UNCANNY AVENGERS®

MARVEL

#25

ZUB
JACINTO
RAMÍREZ
LINDSAY
BONVILLAIN
ROSENBERG

RIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRIKRI
DON'T FREAK OUT!
#@$%!
NNGAAH!

THE SEWERS BENEATH NEW YORK CITY.
SPLORCH
VAAAM
STAY CLOSE AND LET 'EM HAVE IT!
ZZZAAAAK

The UNCANNY AVENGERS in...

THE NIGHT SHIFT

PART TWO

WRITER: JIM ZUB
ARTISTS: KIM JACINTO,
JAHNOY LINDSAY & JUANAN RAMÍREZ
COLOR ARTISTS: TAMRA BONVILLAIN
& RACHELLE ROSENBERG
LETTERER: VC'S CLAYTON COWLES

COVER: R.B. SILVA & JESUS ABURTOV
X-MEN TRADING CARD VARIANT: JIM LEE & CHRIS SOTOMAYOR
WITH MICHAEL KELLEHER
ASSISTANT EDITOR: ALANNA SMITH
EDITOR: TOM BREVOORT
EDITOR IN CHIEF: AXEL ALONSO
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER: JOE QUESADA
PRESIDENT: DAN BUCKLEY
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: ALAN FINE
AVENGERS CREATED BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

I'M A SUPER VILLAIN, LADY--YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME!
WATCH YOUR HEAD, SCORPIA!
HEY!
SPLUD
IF YOU PUSH ME AGAIN I'LL BLAST YOUR FACE OFF!
CAN WE PLEASE CONCENTRATE ON THE %&*$ MONSTERS HERE?
WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO ARGUE, SHOCKER.
THE ONLY WAY WE'RE GETTIN' OUTTA THIS ALIVE IS IF WE WORK TOGETHER.
OKAY, LADY...
...YOU'RE THE LEADER 'TIL SOMEONE BETTER COMES ALONG.

"'TIL SOMEONE BETTER COMES ALONG."
AIN'T THAT THE SAD TRUTH!
EVER SINCE STEVE ROGERS DISBANDED THE UNITY SQUAD, AH'VE FELT LIKE THAT'S ALL AH CAN DO...
PRETEND AH'M IN CHARGE 'TIL SOMEONE QUALIFIED TAKES THE REINS.
KEEP THE TEAM STUMBLIN' FORWARD FROM CRISIS TO CRISIS...
...BUT AH CAN'T HANDLE IT!
AH DON'T KNOW HOW TA BE TH' LEADER WE NEED!
AN' WHEN JANET TRIED TA GET ME TA TAKE CHARGE...

...AH LEFT THEM ALL HIGH AND DRY.
JERICHO!
OH MY GOD!
THIS BODY IS A CONDUIT FOR MYSTIC ENERGY...
WE LIKE IT!
ZAK ZAK ZAK
WHATEVER YOU ARE, RELEASE DOCTOR VOODOO NOW!
VOK
UHHH!
NO.
WE WILL KEEP IT.

WE WERE INVITED TO TAKE THIS PLACE AND EVERYTHING INSIDE.
WE ACCEPTED.
WE'RE NOT GOING DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT, PAL!
JOHNNY, DON'T BLAST HIM! YOU COULD HURT VOODOO.
I KNOW, SYNAPSE, BUT WHAT ELSE AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
YOU CANNOT STOP US.
THIS BODY IS OURS.
THIS CITY IS OURS.
KRIK
KRIK
KRIK
KRIK
KRIK
KRIK

THE WAVES OF **FEAR** AND **PAIN** AROUND US ARE BRUTAL, BUT I'LL TRY TO CONTACT JERICHO'S ***SUBCONSCIOUS MIND*** AND FORCE OUT THAT MONSTER.
SOUNDS GOOD. JUST HOLD ON WHILE I KEEP THESE CRITTERS OFF YOU.
DO WE HAVE A ***BACKUP PLAN*** IF THIS DOESN'T WORK?
HAVE WE EVER?
GOOD POINT.
LET'S ***FIRE IT UP!***

FOOOOSH
GYAA
GYAA
GYAA
GYAA
GYAA
WASP, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YEAH, JUST A BIT WOOZY AFTER THAT HIT.
BURN WHILE YOU CAN, IT WILL NOT MATTER.
YOUR LIGHT WILL DIE. OUR DARKNESS WILL OVERTAKE YOU.
EVERY SHADOW IS OURS...
...AND THIS NEW HOME IS MADE FOR US...
I'M PUSHING AS HARD AS I CAN, BUT I CAN'T FIND JERICHO!
HE'S... HE'S JUST NOT THERE!
IT'S TRUE...

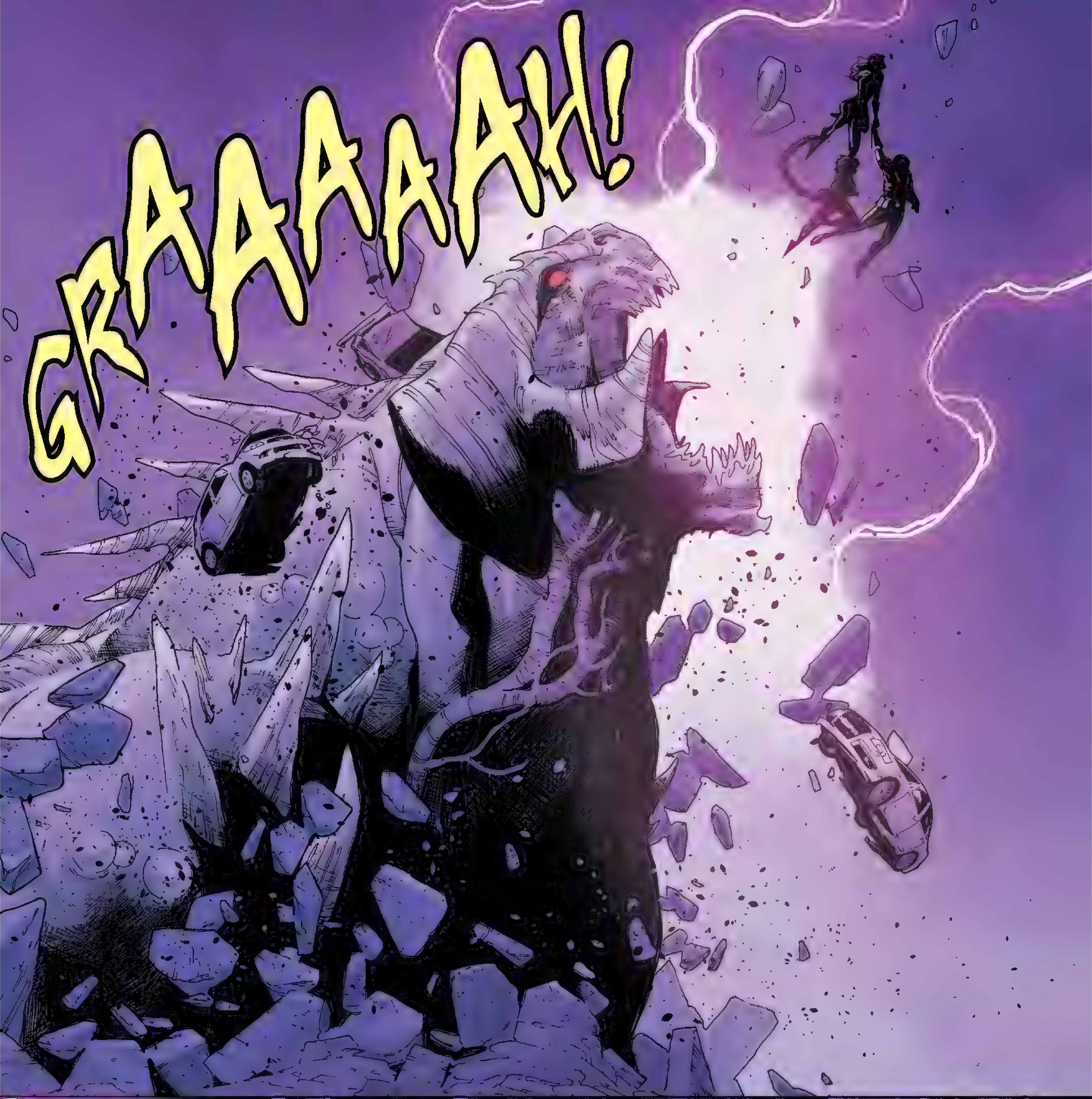
...MY SPIRIT HAS BEEN DISPLACED BY THAT DARKFORCE CREATURE INHABITING MY BODY.
MAY I SHARE YOURS UNTIL WE CAN ROUTE THIS INVADER?
UHHH...

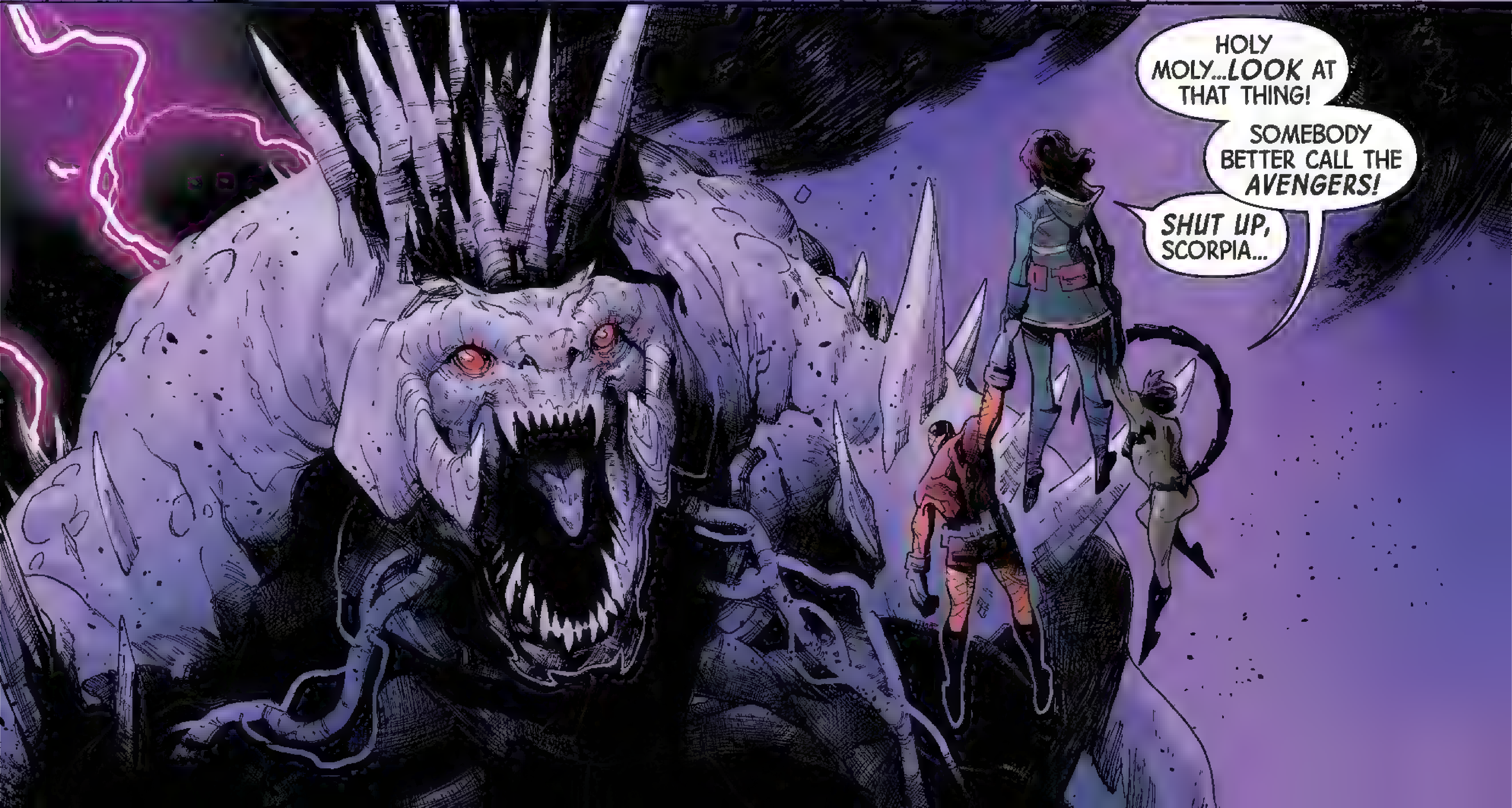
EVERYBODY *OKAY?*
YEAH...THAT WAS ACTUALLY KIND OF A RUSH!
I'M JUST AMAZED YOU DIDN'T *ELECTROCUTE* YOURSELF WITH THOSE STUPID *GLOVES.*
I TOLD YA *BEFORE,* MY *VIBRO-SMASHERS* DON'T SHOOT OUT *ELECTRICITY!* THEY *VIBRATE* THE AIR *REALLY FAST.*
OKAY, THEN WHY ARE YOU CALLED *"THE SHOCKER"* INSTEAD OF, LIKE...I DON'T KNOW... THE *VIB--*
DON'T SAY IT! JUST *DON'T!*
YOU TWO ARE *CUTE* AN' ALL, BUT WE STILL GOT SOME *UNFINISHED BUSINESS* 'BOUT YOU ROBBIN' THAT *BANK...*
SERIOUSLY?
I THOUGHT THIS WAS THE PART WHERE WE *TEAM UP* 'CAUSE WE RISKED OUR LIVES FOR EACH OTHER AND STUFF.
HONEY, THAT ONLY HAPPENS IN *COMIC BOOKS.*
RRRRUUUUUUUMBLE
YOU WERE *LOOTIN'* DURING A CRISIS AND...
...UHHH...

GRAAAAAH!
OH, COME ON!

IF YOU GUYS COULD *HURRY THIS UP,* THAT WOULD BE JUST *DANDY!*
STAY *CALM,* EMILY. YOU ARE DOING WELL.
O-OKAY...
LAY WASTE. LAY CLAIM.
IT IS ALL OURS.
HOW DO YOU *FEEL?*
WEIRD, BUT *GOOD.* LET'S GO.
PURIFY THE BODY, RELEASE THE FLESH...
YOUR MAGIC WILL NOT SAVE YOU, SORCERER.
CREATURE RAMPAGE OR *WIZARD BATTLE?*
WE NEED TO KEEP PEOPLE SAFE AND HOPE SYNAPSE AND VOODOO CAN SORT OUT THE REST.

GRAAAAAH!
IF WE GET OUTTA THIS *ALIVE*, I PROMISE *NEVER* TO ROB A BANK *AGAIN!*
BOTH OF YOU *HOLD ON!*
VAAM
ZRRAK
K-DANG


GRAAAAAH!


HOLY MOLY...*LOOK* AT THAT THING!
SOMEBODY BETTER CALL THE *AVENGERS!*
SHUT UP, SCORPIA...

ANOTHER ONE DOWN, BUT I'M RUNNING OUT OF *FIREPOWER* HERE, *LITERALLY!*
SPLUD
ZAP ZAP
ZAP
SPLUD
SPLUD
I KNOW IT LOOKS *GRIM,* BUT WE'RE ALL THAT STANDS BETWEEN THESE *GOOBERS* AND OVER A *MILLION NEW YORKERS...*
RRRRRRR
WATCH OUT!
HUH?
THOK
OH NO YOU DON'T!
WHOA!
I THINK THE *NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH* IS ON THE *CASE.*
BAM
THAM

IS EVERYONE *OKAY?*
WE'RE *FINE,* ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.
DESTRUCTION, CRAZINESS, DEMONS FALLING FROM THE SKY...
REMINDS ME OF THE *INFERNO* FROM BACK IN THE DAY.
THAT WAS BEFORE OUR TIME, *AJUSSHI.*
IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE WE CAN DO FOR YOU?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT US. GO FIND OTHER PEOPLE IN NEED AND HELP THEM.
GRAAAAAH!
THAT'S NOT GOOD...

YOU'RE A STUBBORN ONE, AREN'T YOU?!
RRRRRR!
FOOOM
GO AHEAD, TAKE YOUR BODY BACK...IF YOU CAN!
I SHALL.

G'RAH!
RELEASE ME!
FOOL!
AHHH!
YOU DO NOT HAVE THE *STRENGTH!*
THOK
PERHAPS NOT, BUT I KNOW SOMEONE WHO *DOES...*

DON'T FLY TOWARDS IT! GET US *OUTTA* HERE!
NO CAN DO, SHOCKEROO...
...WE'VE GOTTA STOP THAT MONSTER BEFORE IT HURTS ANYONE ELSE!
WE'RE *NOT* HEROES!
AIN'T A MATTER 'A BEIN' HEROES! WE'RE ALL IN THIS MUCK *TOGETHER!*
OH &#%--
THOOOM

WE'REGONNADIE WE'REGONNADIE WE'REGONNADIE!
ZAAAAK
NO, WE'RE *NOT!*
NOT IF WE HAVE EACH OTHERS' BACKS!
WHUMP
VAM VAM VAM
LOOK AT ME TALKIN' ABOUT *TEAMWORK.*
SUCH A *CROCK.*
AH MESS UP EVERY TEAM AH'M PART OF.
HURT THOSE CLOSEST TO ME.
WRECK *EVERYTHIN'* AH TOUCH.

HOLY $@#%, WE DID IT!
HAHAHA! WE RULE!
ROGUE.
HUH?
IT'S SYNAPSE. WE NEED YOU... BADLY.
AH'M SUCH A FOOL
VOODOO'S BEEN POSSESSED BY SOME KIND OF CREATURE. IT SUMMONED A BUNCH OF REALLY BIG SHADOW MONSTERS.
HEY! WHERE ARE YOU GOIN'?
ALL THESE YEARS AN' I STILL DON'T KNOW HOW TA PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS.
VOOSH
DOES THIS MEAN WE'RE X-MEN NOW?
YOU'RE AN IDIOT, HERMAN...
JERICHO'S FIGHTING IT SPIRITUALLY, BUT ITS PHYSICAL FORM IS TOO TOUGH FOR ME TO HANDLE...
WE NEED YOUR MUSCLES, LADY.
AH GOTTA GET MY ACT TOGETHER

RUN FOR COVER, PEOPLE! I'LL KEEP IT BUSY!
ZAP ZAP
DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH *LONGER* WE CAN KEEP THIS UP.
OH, THANK GOD...
VOOOSH
GRAAH!
WHAM

OKAY, GANG. TELL ME WHAT YA NEED...
THE SHADOW PARASITE IS *ATTACHED* TO MY BODY, ROGUE.
YOU MUST *TEAR IT OUT!*
GAAACK
ARE YOU *SURE?!*
'CAUSE THAT'S GONNA BE PLENTY *MESSY* AND--
JUST DO IT!
OKAY...

SHHHRACK
NOOOO!

BOOM
SHHHOOOOO
OOOOOM

OOOM
OOOM
OOOM
OOM

WE...
...did it.
CAREFUL, EMILY. YOU PUSHED YOUR MIND TO THE LIMIT.
JERICHO... ARE YOU *YOURSELF* AGAIN?
I... *AM.*
MY *INSIDES* FEEL LIKE THEY'VE BEEN SCRAPED WITH *SANDPAPER,* BUT OTHERWISE I AM *WHOLE...*
THANK YOU.
THAT WAS ONE HECK OF A *LIGHT SHOW!*
ROGUE, I DON'T WANT TO *COMPLAIN* AFTER THAT *EPIC RESCUE,* BUT YOU SMELL LIKE *POOP.*
YEAH, SUGAH, THAT'S A BIT OF A *STORY.*
IT WILL HAVE TO WAIT. THE DARKFORCE *CREATURES* HAVE BEEN *WOUNDED,* BUT THEY WILL QUICKLY RECOVER AND ATTACK AGAIN.
WE CAN HANDLE IT IF WE STICK TOGETHER.
SPEAKING OF WHICH, WE NEED TO CLEAR THE AIR ON THIS WHOLE *"TEAM"* THING.
AH HEAR YA, JANET, AND AH AGREE...

...JUST AS SOON AS WE FIGURE OUT HOW TA BRING BACK TH' *LIGHT.*
THE PLIGHT OF NEW YORK CITY IN DARKNESS CONTINUES IN **SECRET EMPIRE #6!** THEN, RETURN HERE NEXT MONTH TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT WITH OUR UNCANNY HEROES BECAUSE THE **WITCH IS BACK!**

ALL-NEW GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY® ANNUAL

BOWERS · SIMS · BEYRUTH · BONVILLAIN

#1

MARVEL

"WE ASKED THE BIG GUYS FIRST.
...AND NOW THERE'S A *FORCE FIELD* AROUND EARTH. IT'S KEEPING US OUT AND EVERYBODY ELSE IN. AND THE CHITAURI JUST KEEP COMING! THEY WON'T *STOP* UNTIL--
"FIGURED WITH THEM ON OUR SIDE, HOW COULD ANYONE TURN US DOWN?
NO.
"IT WAS A LONG SHOT.
KAKARANTHARA: HOMEWORLD OF THE MAKLUANS.
LIGRA: HOMEWORLD OF THE LION-PEOPLE.
"SO WE MOVED ON TO THE WARRIORS.
YOU HAVE HONORED ME WITH GREAT COMBAT THIS DAY, *GAMORA*.
BUT NO. I REFUSE TO AID THE PEOPLE OF EARTH.
KYMELLIA III: HOMEWORLD OF THE KYMELLIAN SORCERERS.
"THEN WE TRIED TO GET THE SCIENTISTS.
NAY.
NEW HALFWORLD: HOME OF...WHO EVEN KNOWS?
"AFTER THAT, WE GOT PRETTY DESPERATE."
NUH-UH, NO WAY, MAC.
NOT EARTH. NOT EVAH.

STARLIN'S BAR, KNOWHERE.
OKAY, BUT... DID YOU ASK ANYONE WHO'S *NOT* A GIANT ANIMAL?
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
SEE, CAROL-- *THAT RIGHT THERE* IS *EXACTLY* WHY NOBODY WANTS TO HELP EARTH!
OUT HERE WE'RE ALL GIANT ANIMALS!
EARTH MIGHT BE HOME TO *YOU*, BUT TO THE REST OF THE *GALAXY*, IT'S THE PLANET THAT BEAT GALACTUS AND BROKE THE *INFINITY GAUNTLET*. ASKING THEM TO GET BETWEEN EARTH AND THE CHITAURI?
THAT'S BASICALLY ASKING THEM TO STEP BETWEEN A *SPEEDING TRAIN* AND A *TODDLER WITH A MACHINE GUN.*
THEY DON'T *LIKE* US! HELL, MOST OF THEM THINK THAT IN A HUNDRED YEARS, WE'LL BE WORSE THAN THE CHITAURI!
LOOK, I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE--I SPENT *YEARS* OUT THERE. I'M AWARE WE DON'T HAVE THE BEST REPUTATION. BUT IT'S BAD HERE, *PETER*. WE NEED A WIN.
JUST... JUST BRING ME SOMETHING. *ANYTHING.*
YEAH, OKAY. SURE.
I'LL LET YOU KNOW HOW IT GOES WITH THE BROOD.
UGH. DANVERS OUT.

HOW LONG'S HE GONNA DO THIS TO HIMSELF?
EARTH'S DOOMED! END OF STORY!
IT'S HIS HOME, ROCKET. AND AS MUCH AS I'M LOATH TO ADMIT IT, IT WAS OURS TOO... FOR A WHILE.
HOME?! YOU CALL THAT FRUTAKIN' MUDBALL HOME?
IT WAS A PIT STOP! A BAD VACATION! DON'T GO REWRITIN' HISTORY HERE, SISTER. YOU'D GET ATTACHED TO AN ELEVATOR IF YOU GOT STUCK IN IT.
I AM GROOT.
I KNOW THE PIZZA WAS GOOD!
IT'S NOT AS THOUGH WE HAVEN'T TRIED TO HELP. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH MORE TIME WE CAN SPEND ON ANOTHER PROBLEM THAT EARTH BROUGHT ON ITSELF.
AGREED. THE FURTHER WE'RE AWAY FROM THE CONFLICT, THE BETTER.
SO WE'RE ALL IN AGREEMENT, THEN?
IT'S TIME WE MOVED ON TO THE NEXT JOB.
SO WHICH ONE OF US IS GIVING PETER THE--
GOOD NEWS, GUARDIANS!
HELP JUST FOUND US!

MANTIS!
WE GOT YOUR MESSAGE.
AS I KNEW YOU WOULD.
IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU, BUT I'M A BIT SURPRISED YOU DIDN'T COME TO ME EARLIER. OR I WOULD BE, IF...WELL, YOU KNOW, I *GOT* SURPRISED.
I WOULD'VE, BUT I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D WANT TO JOIN BACK UP WITH THE GUARDIANS.
OH, I DO NOT. I HAVE...OTHER CONCERNS.
BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN I AM UNWILLING TO OFFER YOU SOME ADVICE.
I AM GROOT.
(I PROMISE, I WILL TELL YOU LATER.)
I CAN GET *ADVICE* ANYWHERE. RIGHT NOW, WHAT I NEED--WHAT *EARTH* NEEDS--IS AN *ARMY.* SO IF *ADVICE* IS ALL YOU'VE GOT FOR US, WE'LL BE ON OUR--
YOU *HAVE* AN ARMY, PETER.
YEAH? *WHERE?*
WITHIN. THE *ARMY* IS--
WITHIN, YEAH, OKAY. I GET IT, I GET IT. THE ARMY'S IN *ME.* IT'S IN ALL OF US. THAT'S VERY ENCOURAGING, BUT--
WITHIN THE *SHIELD,* PETER.
ON EARTH, THERE EXISTS A FORCE UNLIKE ANY IN THE KNOWN GALAXY--*MANKIND.* ALL YOU NEED DO IS *FREE* THEM.
HOW DO I DO THAT? THE PLANETARY DEFENSE SHIELD--
--IS IMPRESSIVE, TRUE. BUT IT IS *NOTHING* WHEN COMPARED TO THE POWER OF--

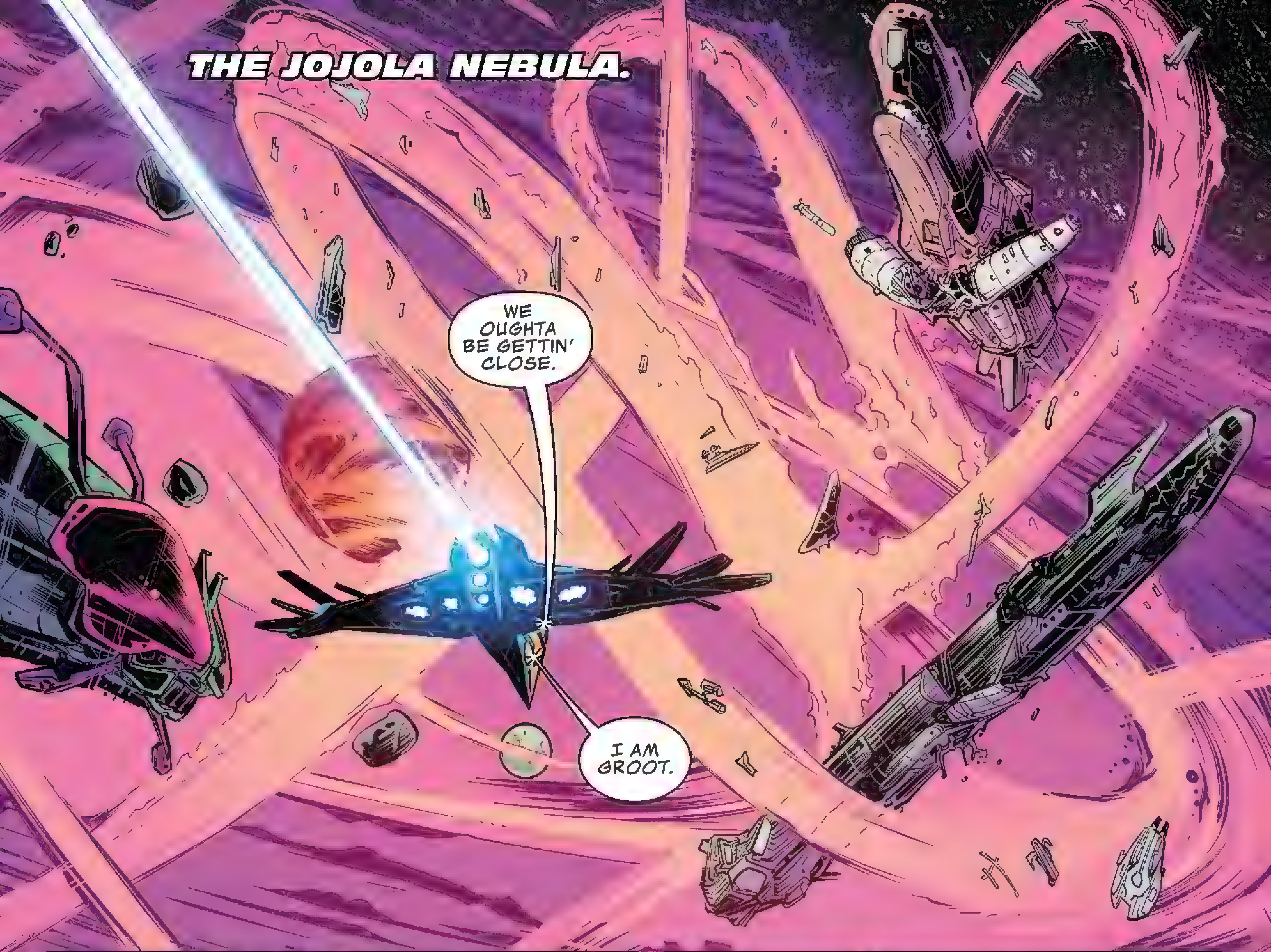
"--GALACTUS.
"IN THE UNIVERSE, THERE EXIST POCKETS DEVOID OF TIME AND SPACE. WEAK SPOTS IN THE FABRIC OF REALITY WHERE THE SEAMS DON'T TOUCH.
"IT WAS THERE THEY GATHERED.
"THE *GREATEST* MINDS FROM A THOUSAND WORLDS, UNITED IN A SINGULAR INTEREST--
"--THE DEVOURER OF WORLDS.
"THEY FOLLOWED HIS PATH OF DESTRUCTION, OCCASIONALLY FINDING SOMETHING OF INTEREST IN THE ASHES OF DEAD WORLDS.
"BUT FAR TOO OFTEN, THE CONCEPT OF GALACTUS PROVED BEYOND THEIR SCIENTIFIC ACUMEN. AND AFTER EONS CHASING THE COSMIC STORM...
"...ALL THEY HAD TO SHOW FOR IT WAS AN IMPRESSIVE COLLECTION OF WEAPONS AND MACHINES...
"...ALL OF IT TOO BIG FOR THEIR SMALL HANDS."

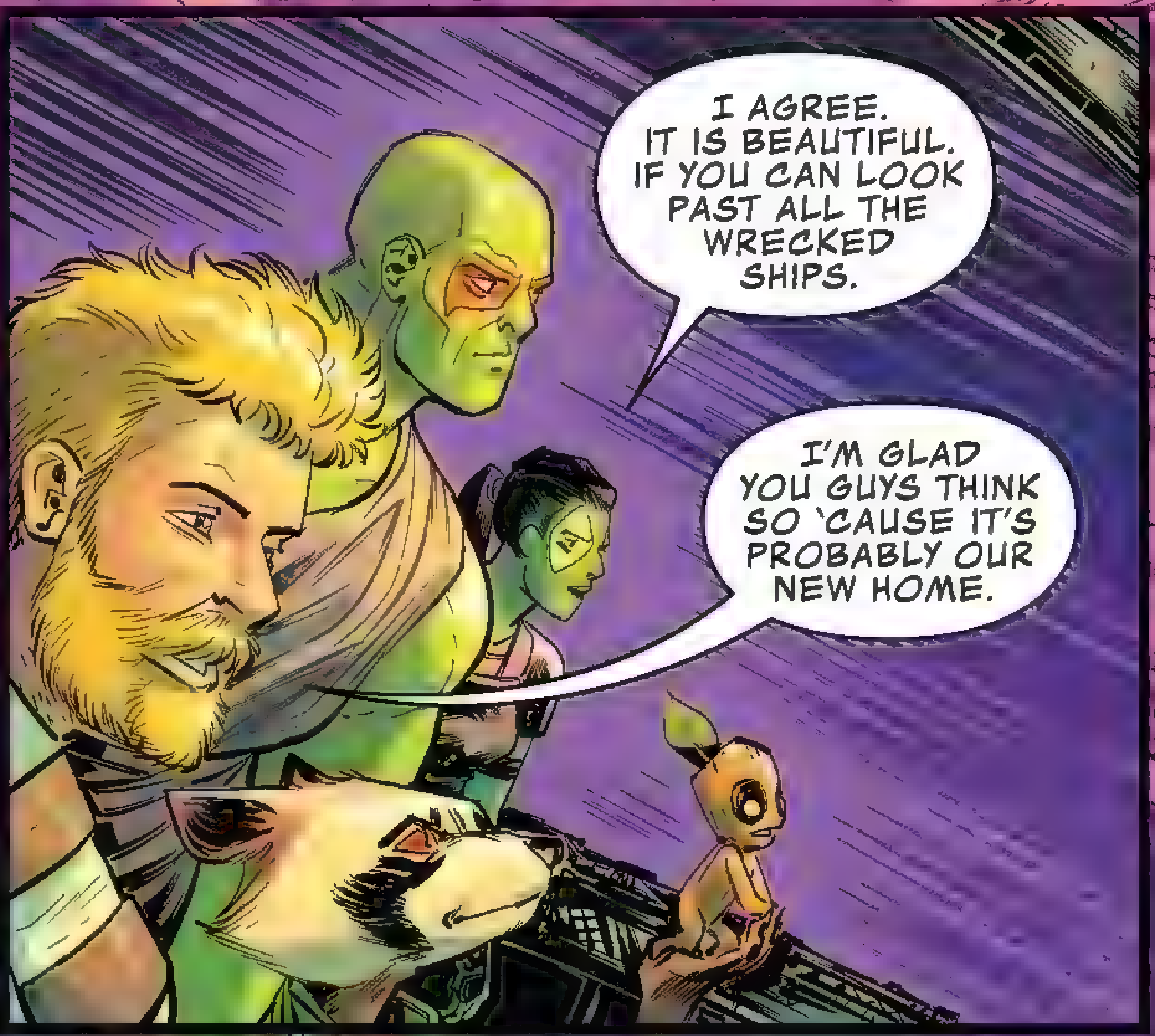
SO WHAT?
ANYONE WHO'S BEEN IN SPACE LONGER THAN A WEEK'S HEARD THAT STORY! CONGRATULATIONS, MANTIS-- YOU JUST TOLD ALL OF US SOMETHING WE *ALREADY* KNOW.
I'VE NEVER HEARD THIS STORY.
SHUT UP, DRAX.
IF WE HURRY, MAYBE WE CAN MAKE IT BACK TO EARTH IN TIME TO BE EATEN BY ONE OF THOSE GIANT CHITAURI SPACE SNAKE-THINGS.
IN THIS PLACE I SPOKE OF, PETER, YOU WILL FIND A MACHINE TO DISRUPT THE SHIELD THAT IMPERILS EARTH.
THIS MUCH I HAVE SEEN. THIS MUCH I *KNOW.*
HOW DO WE FIND THIS PLACE?
WHOA WHOA WHOA, WHAT'RE YOU DOING, GAMORA? I THOUGHT WE AGREED TO CALL THIS LITTLE DETOUR A BUST! EARTH'S ON ITS OWN, RIGHT? DIDN'T WE SAY THAT?
WE'VE GOT A WHOLE **GALAXY** TO GUARD!
WE'RE THE GUARDIANS OF *ALL* THE GALAXY. NOT JUST THE PARTS WE LIKE.
HEY...
WELL SAID.
I AM GROOT.
NO, IT IS NOT AN EASY PLACE TO FIND. OTHERWISE, YOU'D BE BREAKING INTO THE COLLECTOR'S TROPHY ROOM INSTEAD OF TRAVELING INTO THE *JOJOLA NEBULA.*
JOJOLA?!

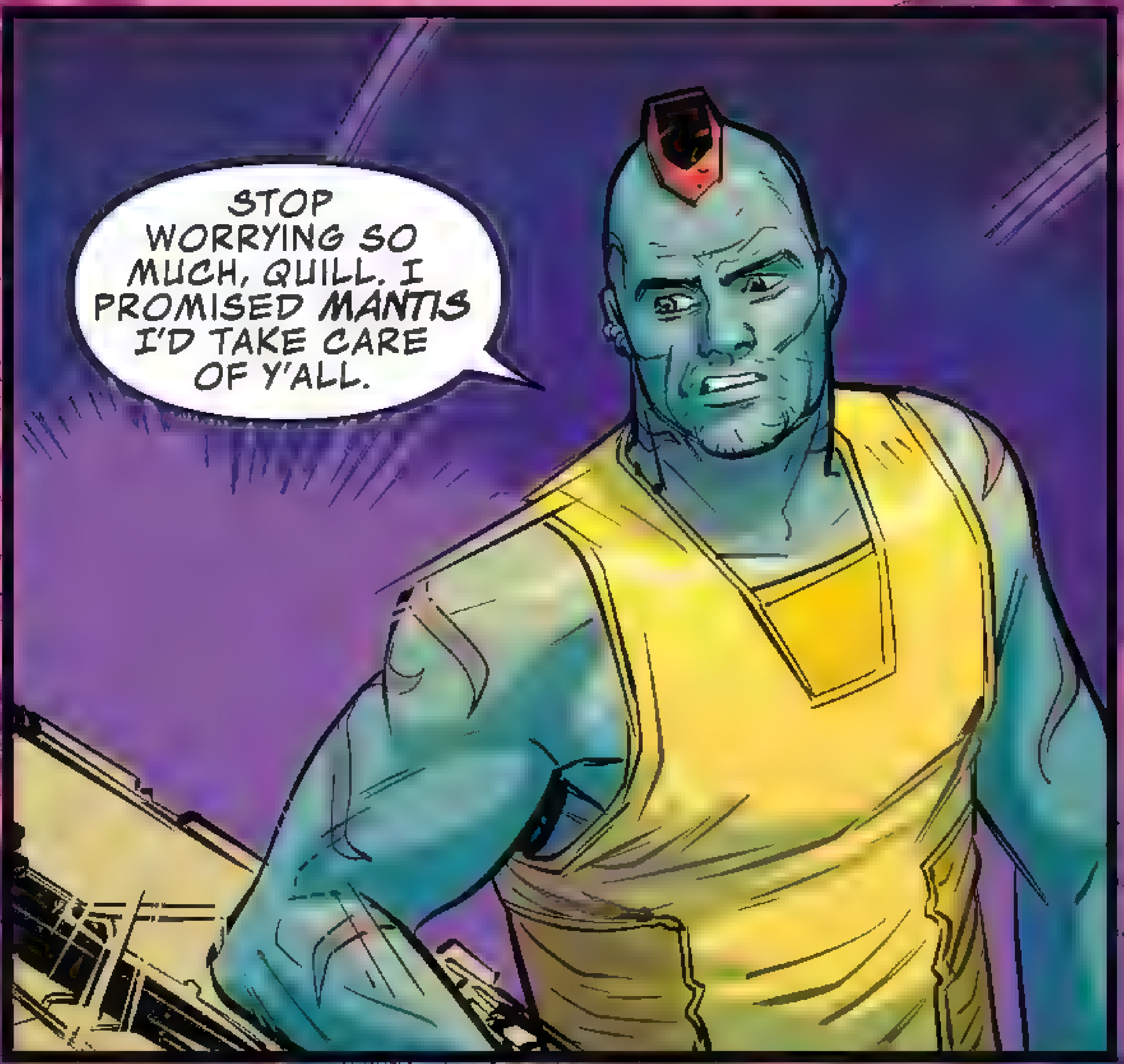
THAT'S WHERE YOU WANT US TO GO? THE JOJOLA NEBULA IS IMPOSSIBLE TO GET OUT OF! SHIPS GO IN, BUT THEY DON'T COME OUT. IT'S LIKE THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE OF SPACE.
WHAT'S THE BERMUDA--
A PLACE YOU GET LOST AND DIE AND DON'T COME BACK FROM!
MANTIS, LISTEN--YOU'VE NEVER POINTED ME IN THE WRONG DIRECTION, BUT... I CAN'T DO IT.
I CAN'T ASK THESE GUYS TO GO INTO THE JOJOLA TO FIND A WAREHOUSE FULL OF GALACTUS TECH THAT MIGHT NOT EVEN EXIST. KNOWING THAT WE PROBABLY DEFINITELY WON'T COME BACK.
IF THAT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN HELP CAPTAIN MARVEL BREAK THAT FORCE FIELD, THEN MAYBE ROCKET'S RIGHT--
MAYBE?
MAYBE EARTH HAS TO FIGURE THIS ONE OUT ON THEIR OWN.
BUT WE WILL GO WITH YOU. ALL YOU NEED DO IS ASK. POLITELY.
WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE IT IS. IT'S LIKE WE'D BE TRYING TO GET LOST IN A PLACE PEOPLE ALREADY DON'T COME BACK FROM.
NOBODY COMES BACK, GAMORA.
ONE MAN DID.
WHO? YOU THINK HE'D HELP US?
AS A MEMBER OF THE KNOWHERE CORPS, I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF ASKING HIM MYSELF BEFORE YOU ARRIVED. THE QUESTION IS--

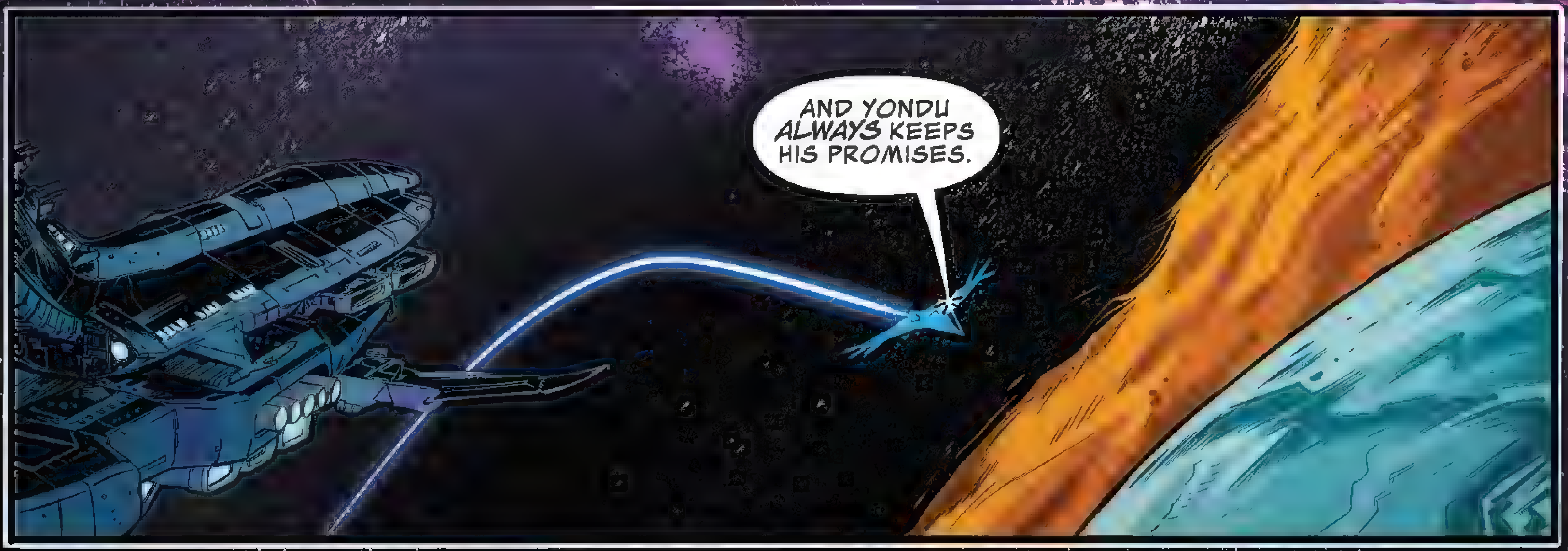
"--WILL YOU LET HIM?"
HOW LONG WE GONNA WAIT, HUH? QUILL'S BEEN IN THERE FOR OVER AN--
I AM GROOT.
HUSH. YOU CAN'T BE CUTER THAN ME AND SMARTER.
KNOWHERE DETENTION COMPLEX.
HERE HE COMES.
EVERYBODY IN THE SHIP!
LET'S GET IN THE SKY BEFORE I CHANGE MY MIND-- LET'S GO!
PETER, WHAT'S--
HEY, BOY...
...YOU CAN'T BE RUNNING OFF WITHOUT OL' YONDU, NOW.
I BEEN RELEASED INTO YOUR CUSTODY. I'M YOUR PRISONER.
HOW'S THAT FOR IRONY, HUH?
AAAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

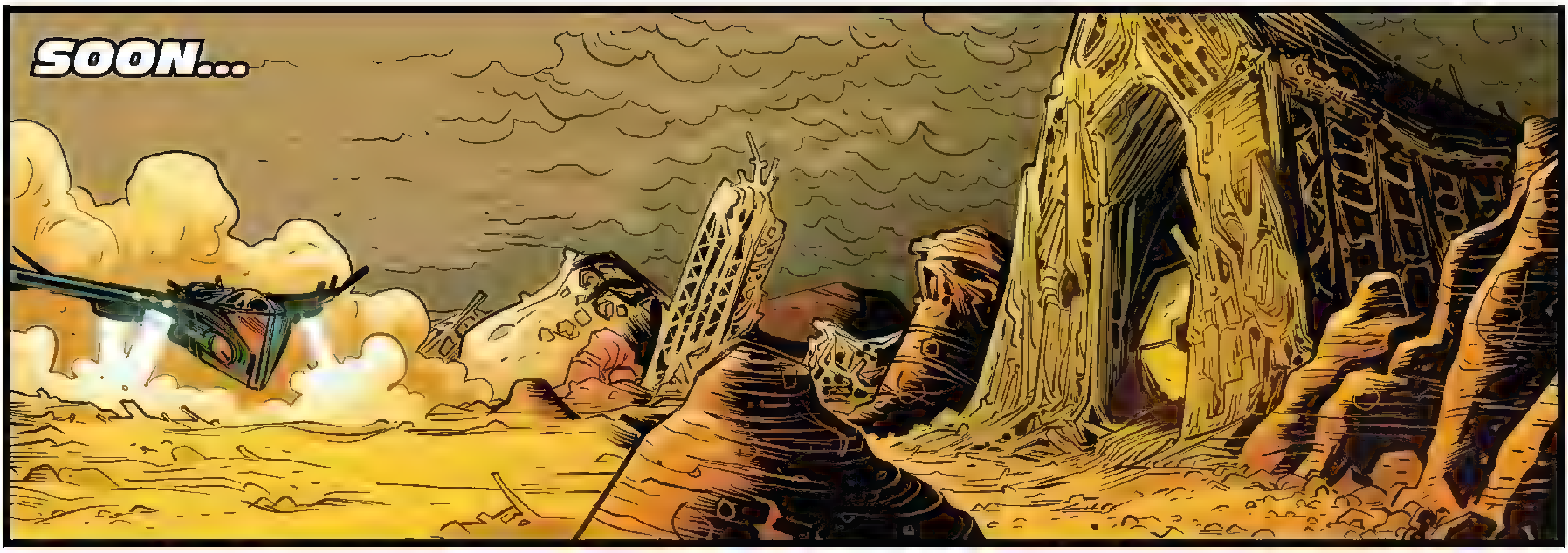
WHO IS HE?
YONDU UDONTA. PIRATE. CRIMINAL.
SINGLE.
I AM GROOT.
NO, NO, THAT'S THE *OTHER* YONDU. HE'S ALL RIGHT. THIS ONE HERE'S A *STOOLFLART!*
WHEN PETER WAS LOST IN SPACE, YONDU AND HIS CREW, THE *RAVAGERS,* FOUND HIM. MADE HIM THEIR SLAVE.
HEY, WE *SAVED* THAT BOY. SO WHAT IF WE MADE HIM CLEAN A FEW TOILETS?
MADE ME WASH MY CLOTHES IN THEM, TOO!
BAH.
YOU WOULDN'T BE *HALF* THE MAN YOU PRETEND TO BE TODAY IF NOT FOR ME.
LOOK AROUND YOU, BOY--CAPTAIN OF A SHIP, BUNCH A WEIRDOS FOR A CREW. HELL, YOU PRACTICALLY *ARE* ME.
AND WHAT OF *YOUR* CREW, YONDU? WHY AREN'T YOU WITH THE *RAVAGERS?*
BETRAYED ME. LEFT ME FOR DEAD. BUT THAT'S MY BUSINESS...
NOW, SOMEBODY WANNA DESCRIBE WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE OUTSIDE THIS TUB--

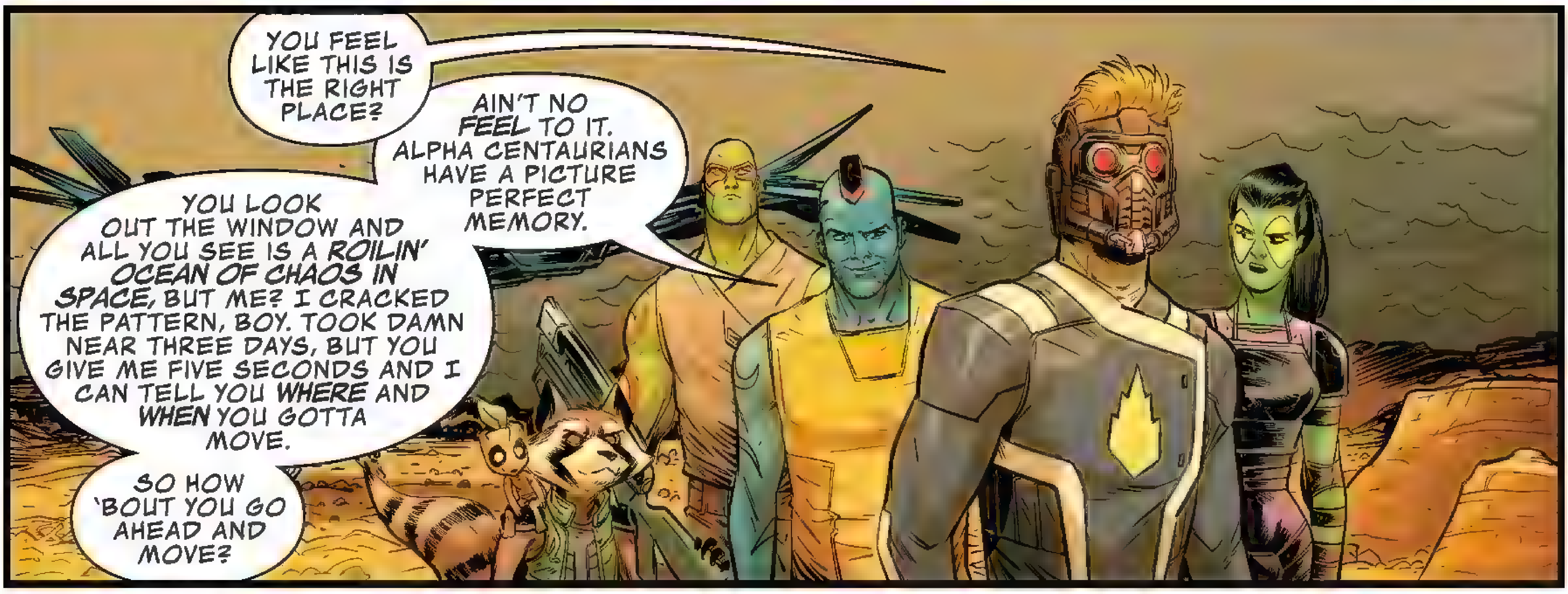

THE JOJOLA NEBULA.
WE OUGHTA BE GETTIN' CLOSE.
I AM GROOT.

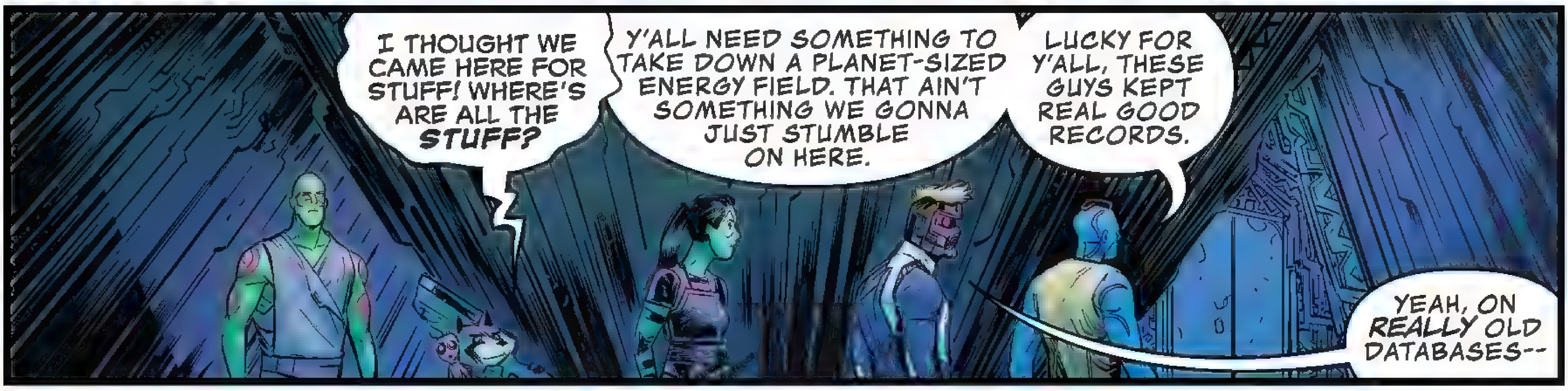

I AGREE. IT IS BEAUTIFUL. IF YOU CAN LOOK PAST ALL THE WRECKED SHIPS.
I'M GLAD YOU GUYS THINK SO 'CAUSE IT'S PROBABLY OUR NEW HOME.

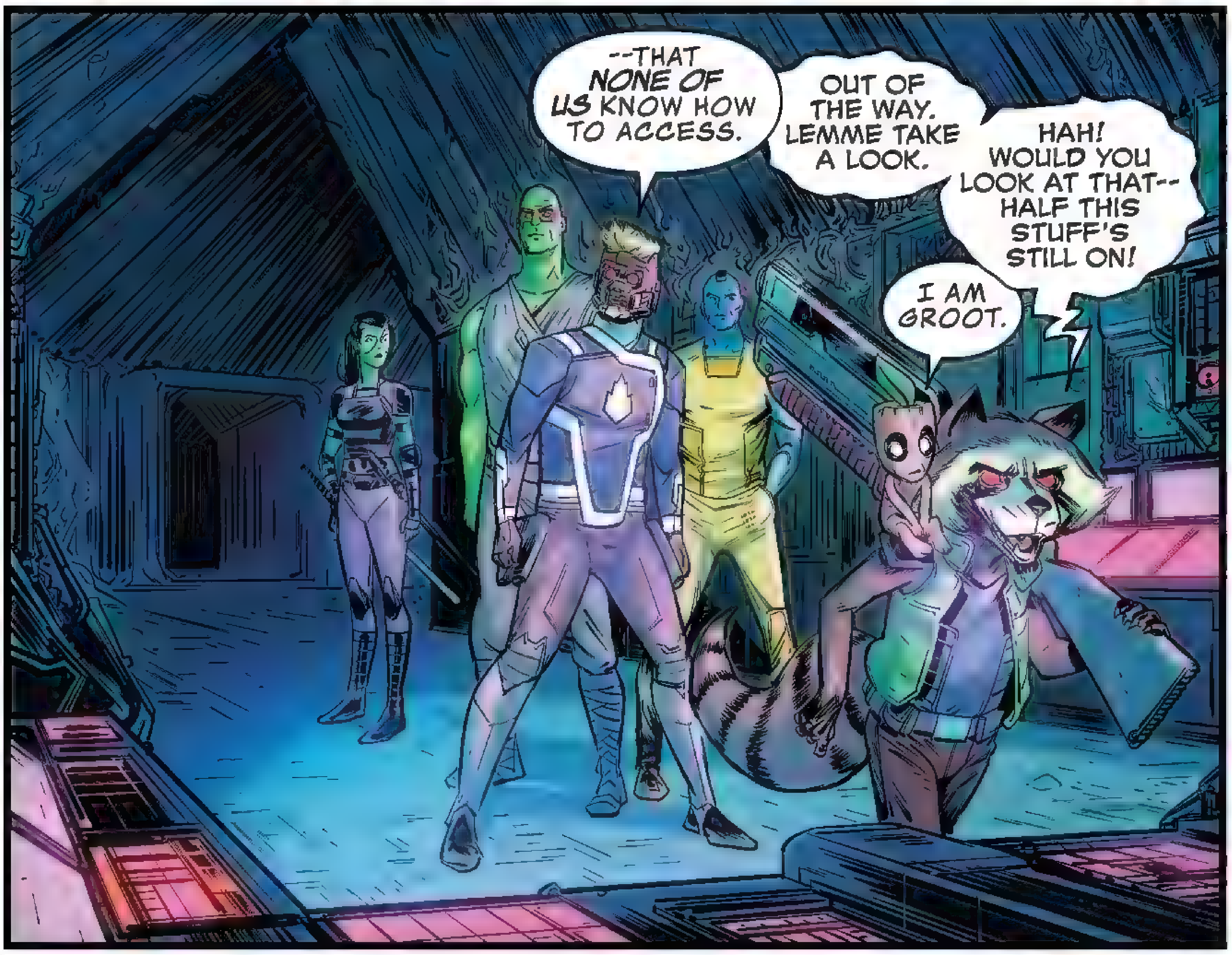

STOP WORRYING SO MUCH, QUILL. I PROMISED *MANTIS* I'D TAKE CARE OF Y'ALL.

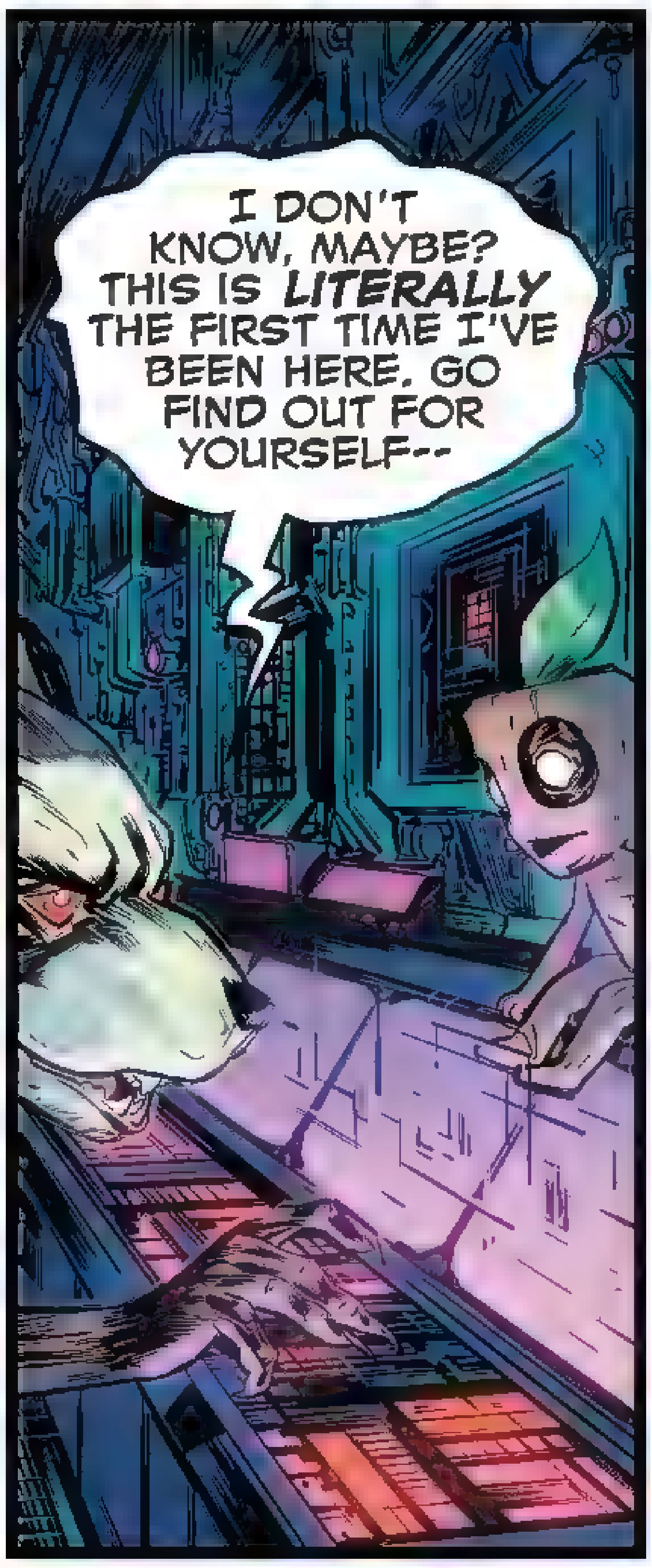

AND YONDU *ALWAYS* KEEPS HIS PROMISES.


SOON...


YOU FEEL LIKE THIS IS THE RIGHT PLACE?
AIN'T NO *FEEL* TO IT. ALPHA CENTAURIANS HAVE A PICTURE PERFECT MEMORY.
YOU LOOK OUT THE WINDOW AND ALL YOU SEE IS A *ROILIN' OCEAN OF CHAOS IN SPACE,* BUT ME? I CRACKED THE PATTERN, BOY. TOOK DAMN NEAR THREE DAYS, BUT YOU GIVE ME FIVE SECONDS AND I CAN TELL YOU *WHERE* AND *WHEN* YOU GOTTA MOVE.
SO HOW 'BOUT YOU GO AHEAD AND MOVE?


I THOUGHT WE CAME HERE FOR STUFF! WHERE'S ARE ALL THE *STUFF?*
Y'ALL NEED SOMETHING TO TAKE DOWN A PLANET-SIZED ENERGY FIELD. THAT AIN'T SOMETHING WE GONNA JUST STUMBLE ON HERE.
LUCKY FOR Y'ALL, THESE GUYS KEPT REAL GOOD RECORDS.
YEAH, ON *REALLY* OLD DATABASES--


--THAT *NONE OF US* KNOW HOW TO ACCESS.
OUT OF THE WAY. LEMME TAKE A LOOK.
HAH! WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT--HALF THIS STUFF'S STILL ON!
I AM GROOT.


I DON'T KNOW, MAYBE? THIS IS *LITERALLY* THE FIRST TIME I'VE BEEN HERE. GO FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF--

BUT DON'T *TOUCH* ANYTHING!
LITTLE WEED'S GOT A GOOD IDEA. THINK I'LL HAVE A LOOK AROUND, TOO. CALL ME WHEN IT'S TIME TO--
LIKE *HELL* YOU WILL. YOU'RE MY RESPONSIBILITY, AND YOU'RE NOT LEAVING MY SIGHT.
GROWN SOME STONES, AIN'TCHA, BOY?
YOU DO WHATEVER YOU NEED TO DO, BUT JUST REMEMBER...
THERE'S A REASON *NOBODY* LAYS HANDS ON YONDU.
REALLY? NOT EVEN THE CONSTABLES BACK ON KNOWHERE? I GUESS MAYBE YOU JUST *FELL* INTO THAT PRISON CELL I PULLED YOU OUT OF, THEN?
YOU BEST *BACK OFF,* QUILL! 'FORE I PUT YOU ACROSS MY KNEE AND--
YOU WANNA TRY IT?! I'M NOT THAT KID ANYMORE, YONDU!
QUILL, DON'T LET HIM--
OUT OF THE WAY--HE WANTS TO FIGHT, *LET HIM!*
I USED TO *DREAM* ABOUT KICKING YOUR ASS... BUT SEEING YOU NOW, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, IT LOOKS LIKE THE UNIVERSE BEAT ME TO IT.
FOUND IT!
THE *"TRANSLUMINAL TUNING FORK."*
"USED BY GALACTUS TO DISRUPT THE MAGNETIC DEFENSE FIELD SURROUNDING *LUPHOM II.*"
AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT I THINK IT SAYS.
NICE WORK, ROCKET.
NOW WHERE DID THEY *KEEP* THE THING?

--YOU SHOULD BE RIGHT OVER IT!
HE'S FLYING US IN CIRCLES. MAYBE YOUR RODENT'S BROKEN. TIME FOR A NEW ONE.
WHY DID WE BRING HIM?
IT WAS EITHER HIM OR DRAX, AND DRAX WON'T EVEN PRETEND TO FIGHT.
PLUS YONDU KNOWS THE LAY OF THE LAND... ALTHOUGH FAT LOT OF GOOD THAT'S DOING US NOW.
I'M TELLING YOU, ROCKET--
--THERE'S NOTHING DOWN THERE BUT JUNK.
THIS CHART SAYS YOU'RE IN THE SPOT. YOU'RE JUST MISSING IT. DO ANOTHER QUICK LOOP AROUND.
MAYBE IT MOVED.
THIS WHOLE FRUTAKING PLACE IS DESERTED, DRAX--
--I DOUBT ANYBODY MOVED IT.
THERE!
WHAT IS IT--
"--WHAT DO YOU SEE?"

QUILL? GAMORA? WHAT'S HAPPENING?
DID YOU FIND IT?
YEAH, ROCKET...
"...WE FOUND IT."

SAYS HERE THEY'RE CALLED... TRANSLATES TO "PUNISHER," I THINK.
SOME KIND OF FOOT SOLDIER ROBOT USED BY GALACTUS TO DEFEND HIS STUFF.
THEY BROUGHT 'EM BACK TO STUDY, BUT IT TURNS OUT THEY'RE SELF-REPAIRING AND SELF-REPLICATING.
DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR 'EM TO OVERRUN THE WHOLE LAB-- THE WHOLE FLARKIN' PLANET.
DRAX, DON'T TOUCH THAT!
GUESS IT JUST GOT A LOT HARDER TO GET THE FORK, HUH?
IT CERTAINLY COMPLICATES THINGS. WE'VE GOT NOWHERE NEAR THE FIREPOWER TO DEAL WITH THIS.
WHAT ELSE IS NEW?
WE'RE TAKING THE MILANO DOWN FOR A CLOSER LOOK. ME AND YONDU ARE GONNA TRY AND LURE THEM AWAY LONG ENOUGH FOR GAMORA TO SWOOP IN AND NAB THE THING WITH A TRACTOR BEAM.
SPEAKING OF--YONDU! DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THESE THINGS? WOULD'VE BEEN NICE IF YOU'D MAYBE GIVEN US A LITTLE--
HEADS UP?
CHAK
WHAT--?!
EMERGENCY EJECT ACTIVATED.
YONDU!

GAMORA!
(DIDN'T KNOW WE HAD THOSE.)
UNIVERSE KICKED MY ASS, HUH?
YOU REALIZE SHE'S STILL ALIVE OUT THERE, RIGHT? LIKE, YOU'RE AWARE THAT YOU JUST GAVE THE MOST DANGEROUS WOMAN IN THE UNIVERSE A DAMN GOOD REASON TO KILL YOU?
I KNEW YOU WERE A GARBAGE PERSON, YONDU--I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE STUPID.
HEH.
OH, I KNOW SHE'S COMIN' BACK. I JUST HOPE SHE THINKS TO BRING AN ARMY.
I SURE AS HELL DID.
KRAGLIN! YOU OUT THERE?
AFFIRMATIVE, CAPTAIN.
THEN WHATCHA WAITIN' FOR? GET TO WORK!
OH NO...

THIS IS KRAGLIN, FIRST OFFICER OF THE RAVAGERS. YOU'RE OUTGUNNED AND OUTSMARTED, AND UNLESS YOU WANT THAT LITTLE SHIP OF YOURS FIREBALLIN' INTO THAT ROCK DOWN THERE...
...I SUGGEST YOU PREPARE TO BE BOARDED.
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?
I'M TAKING IT ALL. YOU, THE SHIP, YOUR BUDDIES... AND THE BIG FORK.
YOU--WE WERE ALREADY TRYING TO GET THE TUNING FORK!
YEAH, BUT WHEN I TAKE IT BACK TO EARTH, I AIN'T GONNA JUST GIVE IT TO 'EM. I'M GONNA SELL IT--AND THROW YOU AND YOUR CREW IN AS A PACKAGE DEAL.

WE GOT A TRACTOR LOCK ON THE TL TUNING FORK, CAPTAIN. LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE BEEN USING IT FOR DECORATION.
HEH. SHAME TO BUST UP ALL THAT HARD WORK, AIN'T IT?
CHOOM
AH WELL, LIKE I ALWAYS TOLD YA, QUILL-- A LITTLE HARDSHIP BUILDS CHARACTER.

WELCOME ABOARD, CAPTAIN. GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK.
YOU BOYS REMEMBER PETER, DON'TCHA?
WHO COULD FORGET LITTLE PETER QUILL, THE *"LEGENDARY STAR-LORD"*?
SAVE IT FOR LATER, KRAGLIN. YOU DO WHAT I TOLD YOU TO?
YESSIR. I SENT THREE OF OUR BEST TO GET THE REST OF THE GUARDIANS.
HEAR THAT, "STAR-LORD"?
I'M GONNA HAVE ME THE WHOLE SET.
YOU THINK I CAN RETIRE AFTER THIS JOB?
THERE ARE ***BILLIONS*** OF LIVES AT STAKE HERE, AND YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT A ***JOB?!***
NOT A JOB--*THE* JOB. I STUMBLED ONTO THIS PLACE ABOUT TWO CYCLES AGO.
TOOK ME HALF THAT LONG TO FIND THE EXIT, BUT I MEMORIZED EVERY STAR ALONG THE WAY.
PLANNED ON COMING BACK WITH THE BOYS TO RAID THE PLACE PROPER-LIKE. THEN I GOT BUSTED ON KNOWHERE.
I STARTED SPREADING THE WORD AROUND ON THE INSIDE I COULD GET THROUGH THE JOJOLA. KNEW IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE SOME SUCKER'D COME ALONG.
AND I COULD NOT HAVE *ASKED* FOR A BETTER SUCKER THAN YOU, QUILL.
WE SENT OUT A TEAM TO RECOVER THE ***HALFWORLDER*** AND THE ***FLORA COLOSSUS***, SIR, BUT, UH, SOME OF THOSE PUNISHERS CAME ABOARD WITH THE ***FORK***, AND--
TH-THEY'RE DISMANTLING THE CARGO BAY, CAPTAIN.
WHAT?! ***NO!*** KRAGLIN, YOU IDIOT! I SAID DON'T BRING THOSE THINGS ABOARD THIS SHIP.
DO YOU REMEMBER ME SAYIN' THAT, SON?

"NOW GET THEM BOYS BACK HERE BEFORE THOSE *ROBOTS* TEAR UP MY SHIP!"
STILL NO RESPONSE FROM THE *MILANO*. I THINK WE GOTTA GO AFTER THEM.
YOU GO. I'LL STAY HERE AND--
AND ***WHAT***, DRAX? EARN YOUR MERIT BADGE FOR ***WAITING?*** THEY COULD BE IN BIG--
--WHO ARE WE KIDDING, THEY ***ARE*** IN BIG TROUBLE. THEY ***ALWAYS*** ARE.
MY DECISION, ROCKET.
I'VE CHOSEN TO MOVE AWAY FROM A PATH OF VIOLENCE.
GOOD NEWS FOR US, THEN--
--KEEP YER PAWS WERE I CAN SEE 'EM, ***RAT***.
KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LAST GUY CALLED ME A RAT?
I AM--
--GROOT!
AT LEAST ***SOMEBODY*** AROUND HERE DOESN'T MIND GETTIN' THEIR HANDS DIRTY.
APPEALING.
APPALLING. I MEANT ***APPALLING!***

THOSE GUYS BACK THERE, THEY WERE RAVAGERS.
I'M THINKING THE CHANCES OF THEM SHOWING UP HERE BY ACCIDENT ARE PRETTY SLIM.
NOTHING LIKE A GOOD OL' **DOUBLE-CROSS** TO GET THE BLOOD BOILING, HUH, DRAX?
I'M NOT FIGHTING.
SURE OKAY, WHATEVER. I'LL BELIEVE THAT WHEN--
--I SEE IT.
GET BACK INSIDE!
CLOSE THEM DOORS-- HURRY UP!

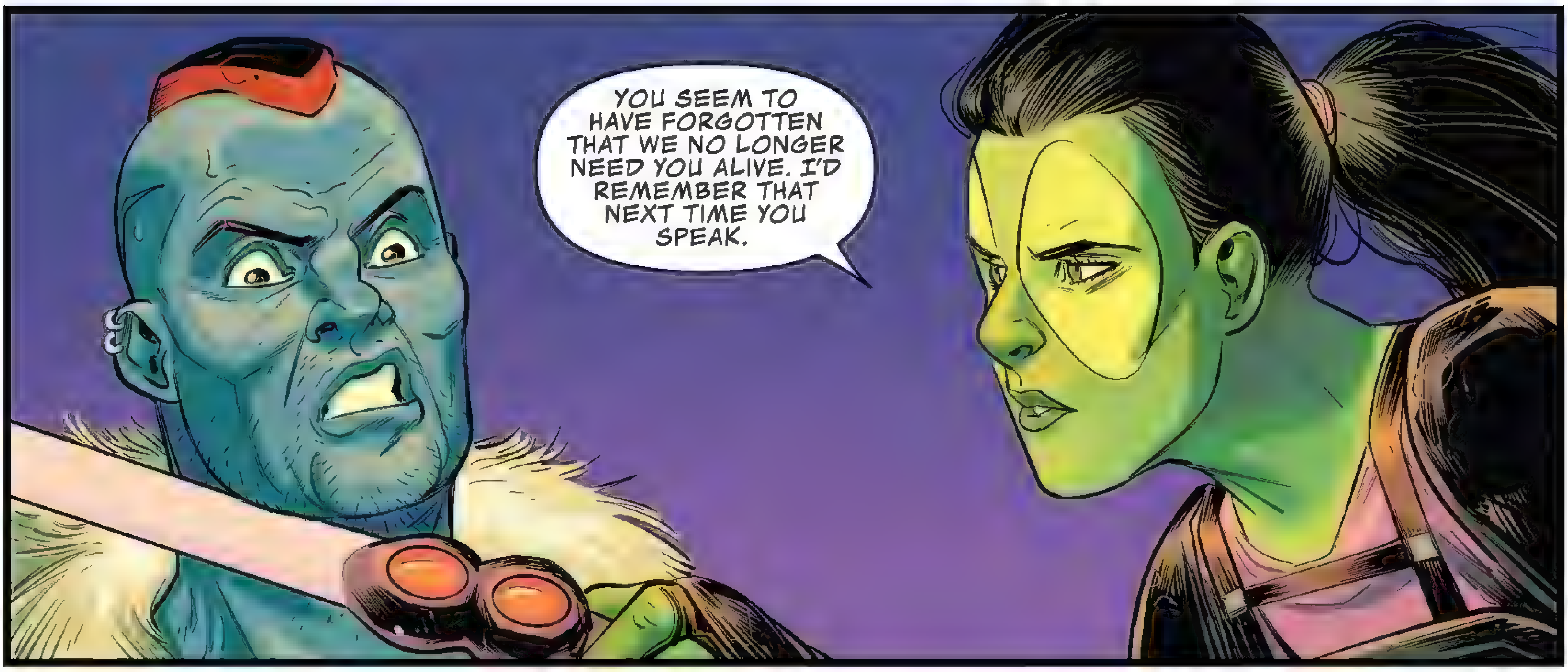
ZAAAK
THOOM
YOU MANIAC! GAMORA'S STILL OUT THERE!
MY SHIP, TOO!
DRAX! GUYS-- WE GOTTA FIND GAMORA!
I SWEAR, IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO--
THERE YOU GO THREATENING ME AGAIN.
NOT THIS TIME!
ALL THOSE MEMORIZED STARS WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD WITHOUT A SHIP. YOU'RE STRANDED HERE WITH ME, YONDU--YOU'RE FINISHED!

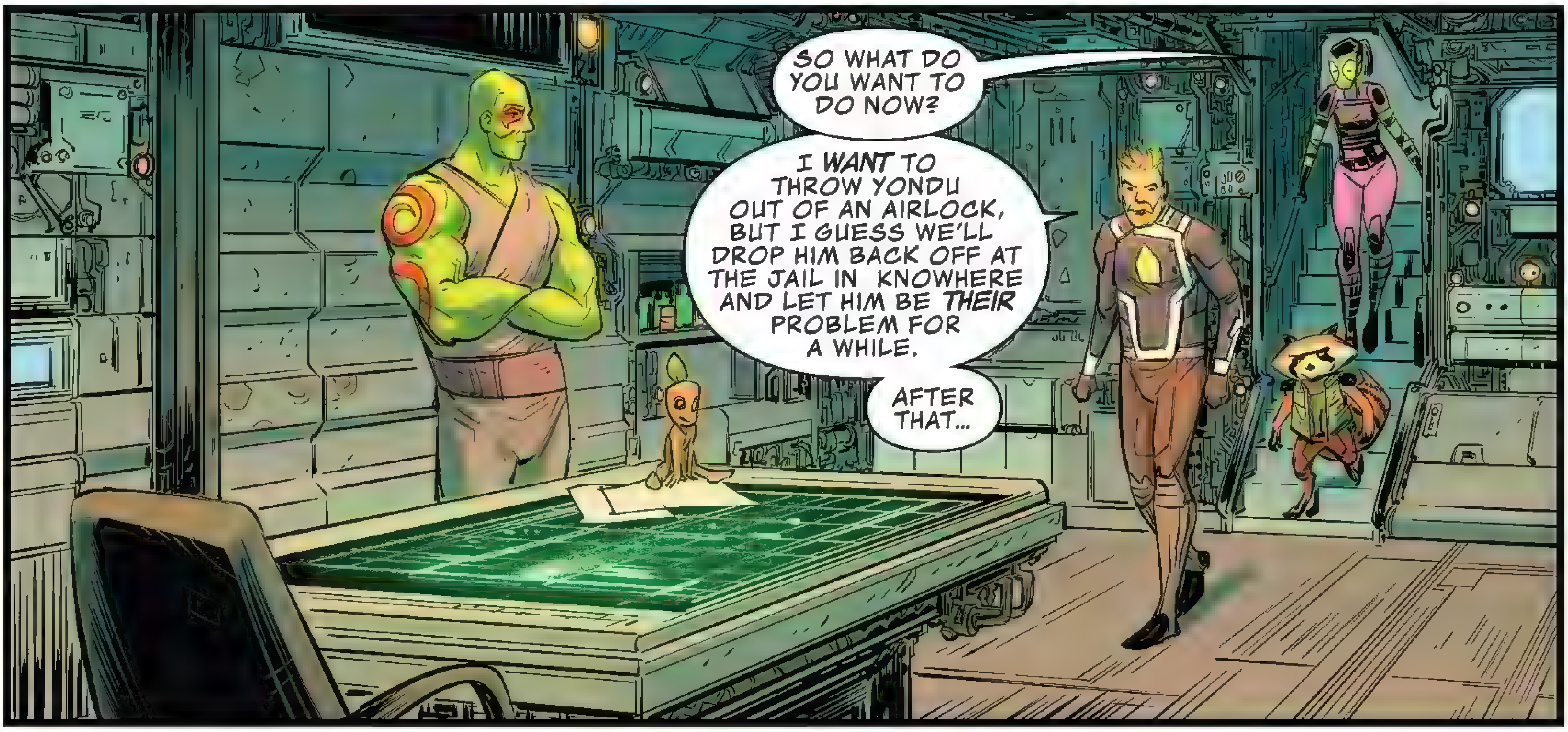
HEY, NOT TO RUIN YOUR BIG MOMENT, BUT WHERE'S **OUR** SHIP?
THEY TOOK IT ON BOARD! WE GOTTA GET TO IT BEFORE THE PUNISHERS TEAR IT UP!
I AM GROOT!
WE NEED AN EXIT.
DOOR'S STUCK.
WON'T EVEN BUDGE.
I WON'T LET--
OH.
DOWN!
GET DOWN!
WHAT THE--
KRAKOOM

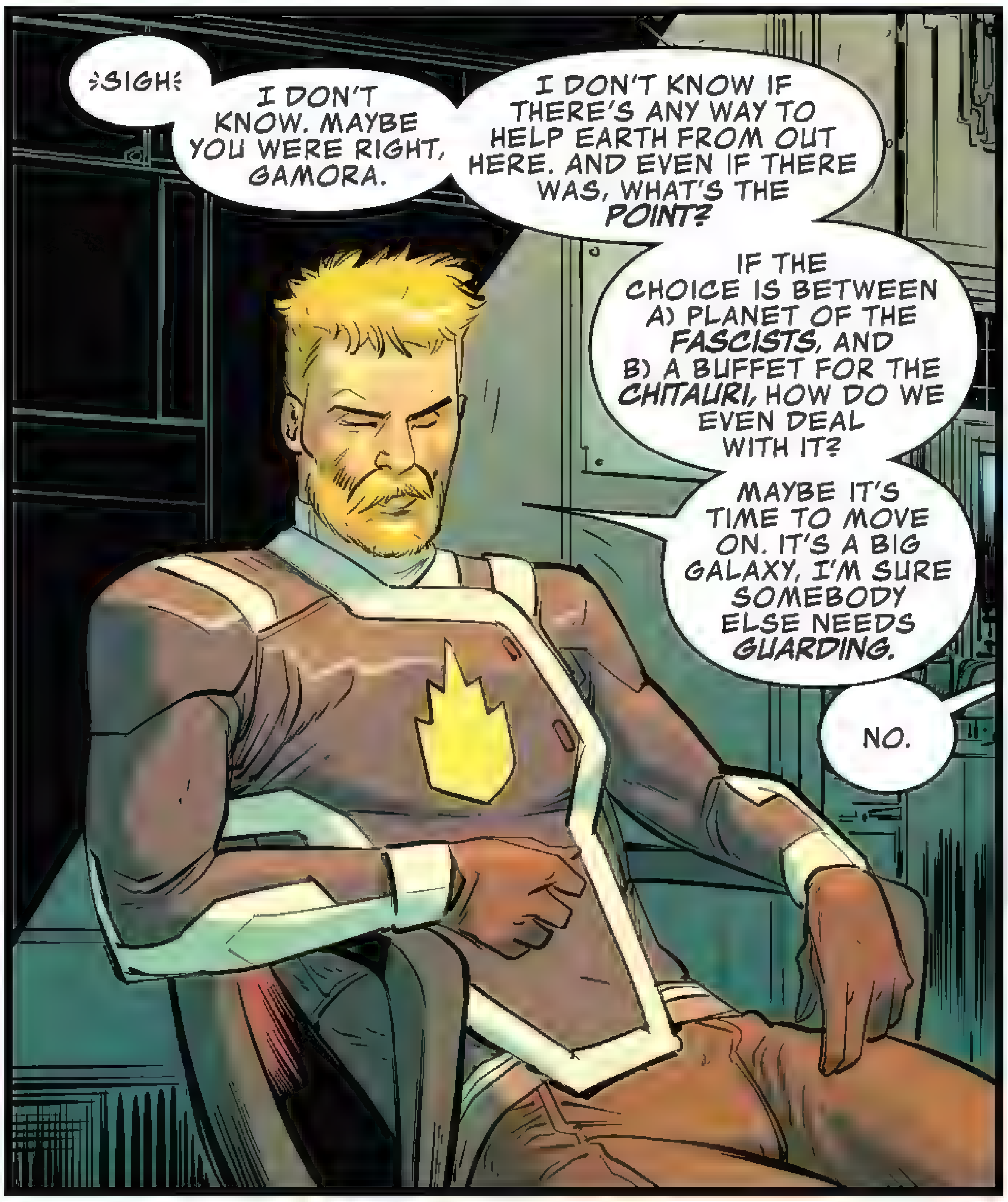
FOUND THE FORK.
VVVVWUNNNNNG
WHERE'S YONDU?

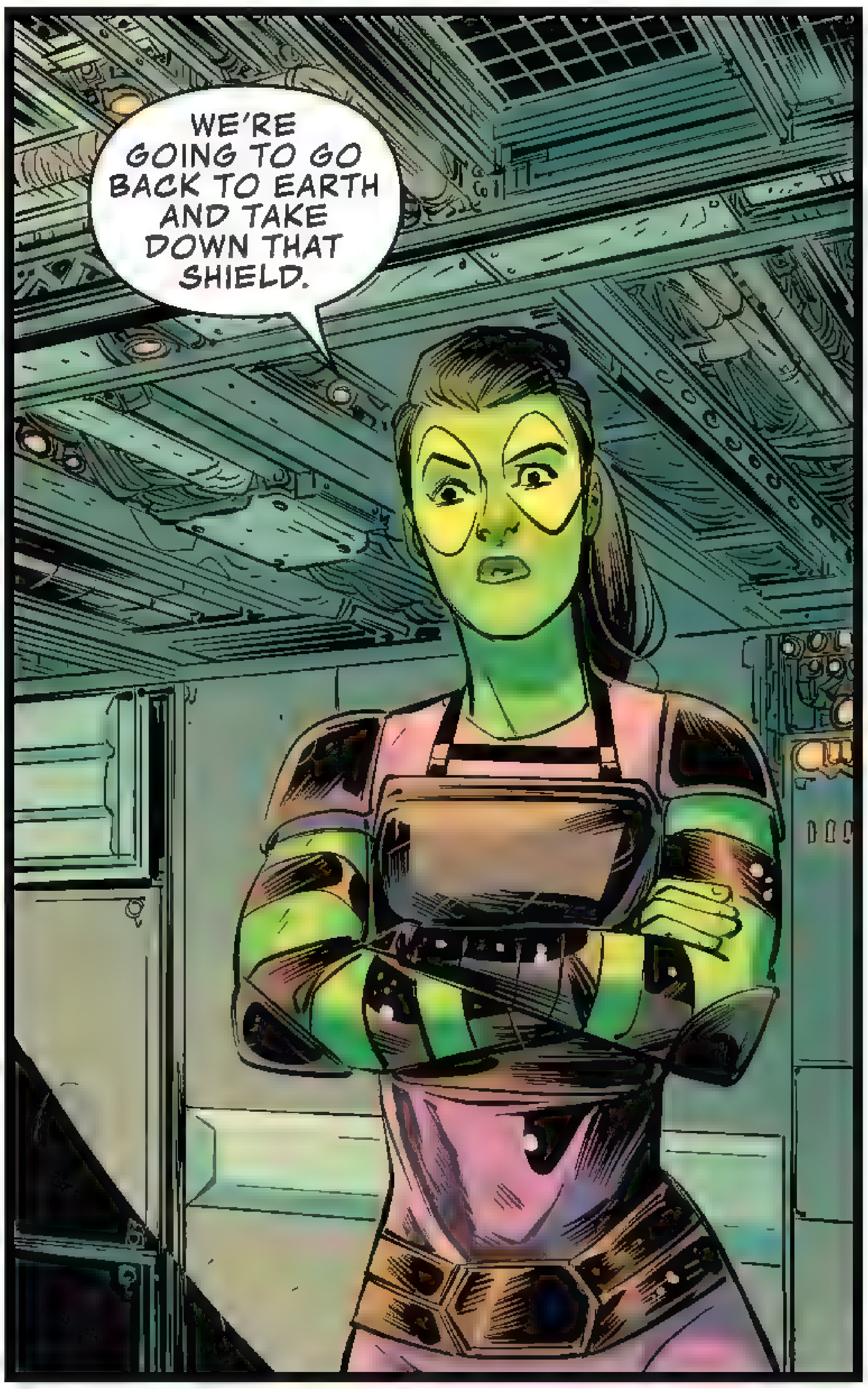
TOLD YOU.
YOU.
GIVE ME *ONE REASON* WHY I SHOULDN'T KILL YOU AND LEAVE YOUR BODY FOR THE PUNISHERS.
HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS HOW TO GET US *BACK.*
UGH.
I SHOULD'VE ASKED FOR *TWO* REASONS.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE JOJOLA NEBULA.
THERE. YOU HAPPY NOW, BOY?
I'LL BE A LOT HAPPIER WHEN WE GET THE TUNING FORK BACK TO EARTH AND TAKE THE SHIELD DOWN.
YEAH, ABOUT THAT...
IT'S BUSTED, QUILL.
PUNISHERS MUST'VE STRIPPED IT FOR PARTS. GAMORA'S STUNT BACK THERE SAVED OUR GLONORDS, BUT IT BURNED THE WHOLE THING OUT. AND THAT WAS, WHAT, A TWENTY-METER RADIUS FOR ABOUT HALF A SECOND?
IT WASN'T ENOUGH, PETER. IT WAS NEVER GONNA BE ENOUGH.
THIS WHOLE THING WAS A FLARKIN' WILD KRUTAK CHASE.
AAAAHAHAHAHA!
LOOKS LIKE NOBODY GOT WHAT THEY WANTED OUT OF THIS ONE!


YOU SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT WE NO LONGER NEED YOU ALIVE. I'D REMEMBER THAT NEXT TIME YOU SPEAK.


SO WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO NOW?
I *WANT* TO THROW YONDU OUT OF AN AIRLOCK, BUT I GUESS WE'LL DROP HIM BACK OFF AT THE JAIL IN KNOWHERE AND LET HIM BE *THEIR* PROBLEM FOR A WHILE.
AFTER THAT...


SIGH
I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE YOU WERE RIGHT, GAMORA.
I DON'T KNOW IF THERE'S ANY WAY TO HELP EARTH FROM OUT HERE. AND EVEN IF THERE WAS, WHAT'S THE *POINT?*
IF THE CHOICE IS BETWEEN A) PLANET OF THE *FASCISTS*, AND B) A BUFFET FOR THE *CHITAURI*, HOW DO WE EVEN DEAL WITH IT?
MAYBE IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON. IT'S A BIG GALAXY, I'M SURE SOMEBODY ELSE NEEDS *GUARDING*.
NO.


WE'RE GOING TO GO BACK TO EARTH AND TAKE DOWN THAT SHIELD.

YOU SERIOUS? C'MON, I KNOW YOU WANTED TO BAIL ON THIS BACK AT KNOWHERE.
THAT'S BEFORE I SAW A MAN WHO WAS WILLING TO ALLY HIMSELF WITH THE PERSON HE HATES MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE TO GO TO A PLACE WHERE HE THOUGHT HE'D DIE, JUST FOR THE *HOPE* OF BEING ABLE TO HELP.
WE MIGHT NOT CARE ABOUT *EARTH,* PETER, BUT AFTER WE SAW THAT, HOW COULD WE ABANDON *YOU?*
YEAH! AN' BESIDES, WE'RE THE ***GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY.*** WHEN HAS OUR FIRST PLAN ***EVER*** WORKED?
TECHNICALLY THIS WAS OUR *FOURTH* PLAN.
OKAY, BUT...
I JUST DON'T SEE HOW *MANTIS* COULD'VE BEEN SO WRONG.
THE *TUNING FORK* WAS JUNK, BUT SHE SAID WE'D FIND SOMETHING THAT COULD HELP US.
SHE *KNEW* WE WOULD.
I AM GROOT!
WHAT HE SAID.
YOU FOUND *US.*
THE END.

SECRET EMPIRE: UPRISING VARIANT BY **RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE**

SECRET EMPIRE: UNDERGROUND VARIANT BY **RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE**

SECRET EMPIRE: UNITED VARIANT BY **RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE**

JIMLEE
¡SOTO!

UNCANNY AVENGERS #25 VARIANT
BY **JIM LEE** & **CHRIS SOTOMAYOR** WITH **MICHAEL KELLEHER**

ALL-NEW GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY ANNUAL #1 VARIANT BY **DAN MORA** & **DAVE McCAIG**

THE RESISTANCE TO THE HYDRA WORLD ORDER TAKES SHAPE!

SOME UNITE WITH HYDRA, BUT OTHERS RETREAT UNDERGROUND…TO BEGIN THE UPRISING! STEVE ROGERS TAKES MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS TO MAINTAIN PEACE — BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY! BLACK WIDOW RECRUITS THE YOUNG HEROES OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE FOR A DEADLY PLAN! AND A COALITION OF HEROES SEEKS AN END TO THE NATIONAL NIGHTMARE — BUT FIRST THEY MUST BRAVE THE DANGERS OF THE SAVAGE LAND! MEANWHILE, IMPRISONED BY HYDRA, THE UNCANNY AVENGERS HAVE A CUNNING ESCAPE PLAN! AND IT FALLS TO THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY TO FIGHT OFF THE CHITAURI INVASION — BUT CAN THEY RELY ON AID FROM YONDU UDONTA?!

COLLECTING *SECRET EMPIRE: UNITED #1*, *UNDERGROUND #1* AND *UPRISING #1*, *UNCANNY AVENGERS (2015B) #24-25* AND *ALL-NEW GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY ANNUAL #1* — BY JIM ZUB, JEREMY WHITLEY, DEREK LANDY, CHAD BOWERS, CHRIS SIMS, DANILO S. BEYRUTH, JOSHUA CASSARA, ERIC KODA, ARIO ANINDITO, KIM JACINTO, JAHNOY LINDSAY, JUNAN RAMÍREZ, RACHELLE ROSENBERG, TAMRA BONVILLAIN, ANTONIO FABELA AND JAVA TARTAGLIA.

T+

ZONE